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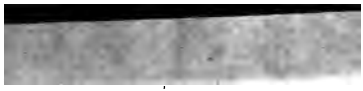

THE

WORK

OF THE

ENGLISH POET

WITH

PREFACE

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITIC

BY SAMUEL JOHNSON

VOLUME THE FIFTY-FIRST.

LONDON:

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MDCCLXXIX.

THE

COMPLAINT:

OR,

NIGHT-THOUGHTS.

PREFACE.

AS the occaſion of this Poem was *real*, not *fictitious*; ſo the method purſued in it, was rather *impoſed*, by what ſpontaneouſly aroſe in the author's mind on that occaſion, than *meditated* or *deſigned*. Which will appear very probable from the nature of it. For it differs from the common mode of Poetry, which is, from long narrations to draw ſhort morals. Here, on the contrary, the narrative is ſhort, and the morality ariſing from it makes the bulk of the Poem. The reaſon of it is, That the facts mentioned did naturally pour theſe moral reflections on the thought of the writer.

THE

COMPLAINT.

NIGHT THE FIRST.

ON

LIFE, DEATH, AND IMMORTALITY.

TO

THE RIGHT HON. ARTHUR ONSLOW,

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

TIR'D Nature's ſweet reſtorer, balmy *Sleep!*
He, like the world, his ready viſit pays
Where Fortune ſmiles; the wretched he forſakes;
Swift on his downy pinion flies from woe,
And lights on lids unſullied with a tear.
From ſhort (as uſual) and diſturb'd repoſe,
I wake: How happy they, who wake no more!
Yet that were vain, if dreams infeſt the grave.
I wake, emerging from a ſea of dreams
Tumultuous; where my wreck'd deſponding thought,
From wave to wave of *fancied* miſery,

At random drove, her helm of reaſon loſt.
Though now reſtor'd, 'tis only change of pain,
A bitter change!) ſeverer for ſevere.
The *Day* too ſhort for my diſtreſs; and *Night*,
Ev'n in the *zenith* of her dark domain,
Is ſunſhine to the colour of my fate.
Night, ſable goddeſs! from her *ebon* throne,
In rayleſs majeſty, now ſtretches forth
Her leaden ſceptre o'er a ſlumbering world.
Silence, how dead! and darkneſs, how profound!
Nor eye, nor liſtening ear, an object finds;
Creation ſleeps. 'Tis as the general pulſe
Of life ſtood ſtill, and nature made a pauſe;
An awful pauſe! prophetic of her end.
And let her prophecy be ſoon fulfill'd;
Fate! drop the curtain; I can loſe no more.
Silence and *Darkneſs!* ſolemn ſiſters! twins
From ancient *Night*, who nurſe the tender thought!
To *Reaſon*, and on *Reaſon* build *Reſolve*,
(That column of true majeſty in man)
Aſſiſt me: I will thank you in the grave;
The grave, your kingdom: *There* this frame ſhall fall
A victim ſacred to your dreary ſhrine.
But what are ye?—
Thou, who didſt put to flight
Primæval *Silence*, when the morning ſtars,
Exulting, ſhouted o'er the riſing ball;
O Thou, whoſe word from ſolid *darkneſs* ſtruck
That ſpark, the ſun; ſtrike wiſdom from my ſoul;

My

My ſoul, which flies to Thee, her truſt, her treaſure,
As miſers to their gold, while others reſt.
Through this opaque of *Nature*, and of *Soul*,
This double night, tranſmit one pitying ray,
To lighten, and to chear. O lead my mind,
(A mind that fain would wander from its woe)
Lead it through various ſcenes of *Life* and *Death*;
And from each ſcene, the nobleſt truths inſpire.
Nor leſs inſpire my *Conduct*, than my *Song*;
Teach my beſt reaſon, reaſon; my beſt will
Teach rectitude; and fix my firm reſolve
Wiſdom to wed, and pay her long arrear:
Nor let the phial of thy vengeance, pour'd
On this devoted head, be pour'd in vain.
The bell ſtrikes *One*. We take no note of time
But from its loſs. To give it then a tongue,
Is wiſe in man. As if an angel ſpoke,
I feel the ſolemn ſound. If heard aright,
It is the *knell* of my departed hours:
Where are they? With the years beyond the flood.
It is the *ſignal* that demands diſpatch:
How much is to be done? My hopes and fears
Start up alarm'd, and o'er life's narrow verge
Look down—On what? a fathomleſs abyſs;
A dread eternity! how ſurely *mine!*
And can eternity belong to me,
Poor penſioner on the bounties of an hour?
How poor, how rich, how abject, how auguſt,
How complicate, how wonderful, is man!
How paſſing wonder He, who made him ſuch!

Who centred in our make ſuch ſtrange extremes!
From different natures marvelouſly mixt,
Connexion exquiſite of diſtant worlds!
Diſtinguiſh'd *link* in Being's endleſs chain!
Midway from *Nothing* to the *Deity!*
A beam ethereal, ſully'd, and abſorpt!
Though ſully'd and diſhonour'd, ſtill divine!
Dim miniature of greatneſs abſolute!
An heir of glory! a frail child of duſt!
Helpleſs immortal! inſect *infinite!*
A worm! a god!—I tremble at myſelf,
And in myſelf am loſt! at home a ſtranger,
Thought wanders up and down, ſurpriz'd, aghaſt,
And wondering at her *own:* How reaſon reels!
O what a miracle to man is man,
Triumphantly diſtreſs'd! what joy, what dread!
Alternately tranſported, and alarm'd!
What can preſerve my life! or what deſtroy!
An angel's arm can't ſnatch me from the grave;
Legions of angels can't confine me there.
'Tis paſt conjecture; all things riſe in proof:
While o'er my limbs *ſleep's* ſoft dominion ſpread,
What though my ſoul fantaſtic meaſures trod
O'er fairy fields; or mourn'd along the gloom
Of pathleſs woods; or, down the craggy ſteep
Hurl'd headlong, ſwam with pain the mantled pool;
Or ſcal'd the cliff; or danc'd on hollow winds,
With antic ſhapes, wild natives of the brain?
Her ceaſeleſs flight, though devious, ſpeaks her nature
Of ſubtler eſſence than the trodden clod;

Active

Active, aërial, towering, unconfin'd,
Unfetter'd with her groſs companions fall.
Ev'n ſilent night proclaims my ſoul *immortal*:
Ev'n ſilent night proclaims eternal day.
For human weal, heaven huſbands all events;
Dull ſleep inſtructs, nor ſport vain dreams in vain.
Why then *their* loſs deplore, that are not loſt?
Why wanders wretched thought their tombs around,
In infidel diſtreſs? Are *Angels* there?
Slumbers, rak'd up in duſt, ethereal fire?
They live! they greatly live a life on earth
Unkindled, unconceiv'd; and from an eye
Of tenderneſs let heavenly pity fall
On me, more juſtly number'd with the dead.
This is the deſart, *this* the ſolitude:
How populous, how vital, is the grave!
This is creation's melancholy vault,
The vale funereal, the ſad *cypreſs* gloom;
The land of apparitions, empty ſhades!
All, all on earth, is *Shadow*, all beyond
Is *Subſtance*; the reverſe is folly's *creed*:
How ſolid all, where change ſhall be no more!
This is the bud of being, the dim dawn,
The twilight of our day, the veſtibule;
Life's theatre as yet is ſhut, and death,
Strong death, alone can heave the maſſy bar,
This groſs impediment of clay remove,
And make us *embryos* of exiſtence free,
From *real* life, but little more remote
Is *he*, not yet a candidate for light,

The *future* embryo, ſlumbering in his ſire.
Embryos we muſt be, till we burſt the ſhell,
Yon ambient azure ſhell, and ſpring to life,
The life of gods, O tranſport! and of man.
Yet man, fool man! *here* buries all his thoughts;
Inters celeſtial hopes without one ſigh.
Priſoner of earth, and pent beneath the moon,
Here pinions all his wiſhes; wing'd by heaven
To fly at infinite; and reach it there,
Where *ſeraphs* gather immortality,
On life's fair tree, faſt by the throne of God.
What golden joys ambroſial cluſtering glow,
In His full beam, and ripen for the juſt,
Where momentary ages are no more!
Where time, and pain, and chance, and death expire!
And is it in the flight of threeſcore years,
To puſh eternity from human thought,
And ſmother ſouls immortal in the duſt?
A ſoul immortal, ſpending all her fires,
Waſting her ſtrength in ſtrenuous idleneſs,
Thrown into tumult, raptur'd or alarm'd,
At ought this ſcene can threaten or indulge,
Reſembles *ocean* into tempeſt wrought,
To waft a feather, or to drown a fly.
Where falls this cenſure? It o'erwhelms myſelf;
How was my heart incruſted by the world!
O how ſelf-fetter'd was my groveling ſoul!
How, like a worm, was I wrapt round and round
In ſilken thought, which reptile *Fancy* ſpun,
'arken'd *Reaſon* lay quite clouded o'er

With

With ſoft conceit of endleſs comfort *here*,
Nor yet put forth her wings to reach the ſkies!
Night-viſions may befriend (as ſung above):
Our *waking* dreams are fatal. How I dreamt
Of things impoſſible! (Could ſleep do more?)
Of joys perpetual in perpetual change!
Of ſtable pleaſures on the toſſing wave!
Eternal ſunſhine in the ſtorms of life!
How richly were my noon-tide trances hung
With gorgeous tapeſtries of pictur'd joys!
Joy behind joy, in endleſs perſpective!
Till at death's toll, whoſe reſtleſs iron tongue
Calls daily for his millions at a meal,
Starting I woke, and found myſelf undone.
Where now my phrenzy's pompous furniture?
The *cob-web'd* cottage, with its ragged wall
Of mouldering mud, is *royalty* to me!
The *ſpider's* moſt attenuated thread
Is cord, is cable, to man's tender tie
On earthly bliſs; it breaks at every breeze.
O ye bleſt ſcenes of permanent delight!
Full, above meaſure! laſting, beyond bound!
A *perpetuity* of bliſs is bliſs.
Could you, ſo rich in rapture, fear an end,
That ghaſtly thought would drink up all your joy,
And quite unparadiſe the realms of light.
Safe are you lodg'd above theſe rolling ſpheres;
The baleful influence of whoſe giddy dance
Sheds ſad viciſſitude on all beneath.
Here teems with revolutions every hour;

And rarely for the better; or the *beſt*,
More mortal than the *common* births of fate.
Each *moment* has its ſickle, emulous
Of *Time's* enormous ſcythe, whoſe ample ſweep
Strikes *empires* from the root; each *moment* plays
His little weapon in the narrower ſphere
Of ſweet *domeſtic* comfort, and cuts down
The faireſt bloom of ſublunary bliſs.
Bliſs! ſublunary bliſs!—proud words, and vain!
Implicit treaſon to divine decree!
A bold invaſion of the rights of heaven!
I claſp'd the phantoms, and I found them air.
O had I weigh'd it ere my fond embrace!
What darts of agony had miſs'd my heart!
Death! great proprietor of all! tis thine
To tread out empire, and to quench the ſtars.
The ſun himſelf by thy permiſſion ſhines;
And, one day, thou ſhalt pluck him from his ſphere.
Amid ſuch mighty plunder, why exhauſt
Thy *partial* quiver on a mark ſo *mean?*
Why thy *peculiar* rancour wreak'd on *me?*
Inſatiate archer! could not *one* ſuffice?
Thy ſhaft flew *thrice*; and *thrice* my peace was ſlain;
And thrice, ere thrice yon moon had fill'd her horn.
O Cynthia! why ſo pale? Doſt thou lament
Thy wretched neighbour? Grieve to ſee thy wheel
Of ceaſeleſs change outwhirl'd in human life?
How wanes my *borrow'd* bliſs! from *fortunes* ſmile,
Precarious courteſy! not *virtue* 's ſure,
Self-given, ſolar ray of ſound delight.

In

In every vary'd poſture, place, and hour,
How widow'd every thought of every joy!
Thought, buſy thought! too buſy for my peace!
Through the dark poſtern of time long elaps'd,
Led ſoftly, by the ſtillneſs of the night,
Led, like a murderer, (and ſuch it proves!)
Strays (wretched rover!) o'er the pleaſing *paſt*;
In queſt of wretchedneſs perverſely ſtrays;
And finds all deſart *now*; and meets the ghoſts
Of my departed joys; a numerous train!
I rue the riches of my former fate;
Sweet comfort's blaſted cluſters I lament;
I tremble at the bleſſings once ſo dear;
And every pleaſure pains me to the heart.
Yet why *complain?* or why complain for one?
Hangs out the ſun his luſtre but for me,
The *ſingle* man? Are angels all beſide?
I mourn for millions: 'Tis the common lot;
In *this* ſhape, or in *that*, has fate entail'd
The mother's throes on all of woman born,
Not more the children, than ſure heirs, of *pain*.
War, Famine, Peſt, Volcano, Storm, and Fire,
Inteſtine broils, *Oppreſſion*, with her heart
Wrapt up in triple braſs, beſiege mankind.
God's image diſinherited of day,
Here, plung'd in mines, forgets a ſun was made.
There, beings deathleſs as their haughty lord,
Are hammer'd to the galling oar for life;
And plow the winter's wave, and reap deſpair.
Some, for hard maſters, broken under arms,

In

In battle lopt away, with half their limbs,
Beg bitter bread through realms their valour ſav'd,
If ſo the tyrant, or his minion, doom,
Want, and incurable *diſeaſe*, (fell pair!)
On hopeleſs multitudes remorſeleſs ſeize
At once; and make a refuge of the grave.
How groaning *hoſpitals* eject their dead!
What numbers groan for ſad admiſſion there!
What numbers, once in *fortune's* lap high-fed,
Solicit the cold hand of charity!
To ſhock us more, ſolicit it in vain!
Ye ſilken ſons of pleaſure! ſince in pains
You rue more modiſh viſits, viſit *here*,
And breathe from your debauch: *give*, and reduce
Surfeit's dominion o'er you: but ſo great
Your impudence, you bluſh at what is right.
Happy! did ſorrow ſeize on *ſuch* alone.
Not *prudence* can defend, or *virtue* ſave;
Diſeaſe invades the chaſteſt temperance;
And puniſhment the guiltleſs; and alarm,
Through thickeſt ſhades, purſues the fond of peace.
Man's caution often into danger turns;
And his guard, falling, cruſhes him to death.
Not *happineſs* itſelf makes good her name;
Our very wiſhes give us not our wiſh.
How diſtant oft the thing we doat on moſt,
From that for which we doat, *felicity!*
The *ſmootheſt* courſe of nature has its pains;
And *trueſt* friends, through error, wound our reſt.
Without misfortune, what calamities!

And

And what hoſtilities, without a foe!
Nor are foes wanting to the beſt on earth.
But endleſs is the liſt of human ills,
And ſighs might ſooner fail, than cauſe to ſigh.
A part how ſmall of the terraqueous globe
Is tenanted by man! the reſt a *waſte*,
Rocks, deſarts, frozen ſeas, and burning ſands:
Wild haunts of monſters, poiſons, ſtings, and death.
Such is earth's melancholy map! but, far
More ſad! this earth is a true map of *man*.
So bounded are its haughty lord's *delights*
To *woe's* wide empire; where deep *troubles* toſs,
Loud *ſorrows* howl, invenom'd *paſſions* bite,
Ravenous *calamities* our vitals ſeize,
And threatening *fate* wide opens to devour.
What then am I, who ſorrow for *myſelf?*
In age, in infancy, from others' aid
Is all our hope; to teach us to be *kind*.
That, nature's *firſt*, *laſt* leſſon to mankind;
The ſelfiſh heart deſerves the pain it feels.)
More generous ſorrow, while it ſinks, exalts;
And conſcious virtue mitigates the pang.
Nor virtue, more than *prudence*, bids me give
Swoln thought a *ſecond* channel; who divide,
They weaken too, the torrent of their grief.
Take then, O *World!* thy much-indebted tear:
How ſad a ſight is human happineſs,
To thoſe whoſe thought can pierce beyond an hour!
O thou! whate'er thou art, whoſe heart exults!
Wouldſt thou I ſhould congratulate thy fate?

I know

I know thou wouldſt; thy pride demands it from me.
Let thy pride pardon, what thy nature needs,
The ſalutary cenſure of a friend.
Thou happy *wretch!* by blindneſs thou art bleſt;
By dotage dandled to perpetual ſmiles.
Know, *ſmiler!* at thy peril art thou pleas'd;
Thy pleaſure is the promiſe of thy pain.
Misfortune, like a creditor ſevere,
But riſes in demand for her delay;
She makes a ſcourge of paſt proſperity,
To ſting thee more, and double thy diſtreſs.
Lorenzo, fortune makes her court to thee,
Thy fond heart dances, while the *Syren* ſings.
Dear is thy welfare; think me not unkind;
I would not damp, but to ſecure thy joys.
Think not that *fear* is ſacred to the ſtorm:
Stand on thy guard againſt the *ſmiles* of fate.
Is heaven tremendous in its frowns? Moſt ſure;
And in its favours formidable too:
Its favours here are trials, not rewards;
A call to duty, not diſcharge from care;
And ſhould alarm us, full as much as woes;
Awake us to their *cauſe* and *conſequence*;
And make us tremble, weigh'd with our deſert;
Awe nature's tumult, and chaſtiſe her joys,
Leſt, while we claſp, we kill them; nay, invert
To worſe than *ſimple* miſery, their charms.
Revolted joys, like foes in civil war,
Like boſom friendſhips to reſentment ſour'd,
With rage envenom'd riſe againſt our peace.

Beware

Beware what earth calls happineſs; beware
All joys, but joys that never can expire.
Who builds on leſs than an *immortal* baſe,
Fond as he ſeems, condemns his joys to death.
Mine dy'd with thee, Philander! thy laſt ſigh
Diſſolv'd the charm; the diſenchanted earth
Loſt all her luſtre. Where her glittering towers?
Her golden mountains, where? all darken'd down
To naked waſte; a dreary vale of tears;
The great magician 's dead! Thou poor, pale piece
Of out-caſt earth, in darkneſs! what a change
From yeſterday! Thy darling hope ſo near,
(Long-labour'd prize!) O how ambition flush'd
Thy glowing cheek! Ambition truly great,
Of virtuous praiſe. *Death's* ſubtle ſeed within
(Sly, treacherous miner!) working in the dark,
Smil'd at thy well-concerted ſcheme, and beckon'd
The worm to riot on that roſe ſo red,
Unfaded ere it fell; one moment's prey!
Man's foreſight is *conditionally* wiſe;
Lorenzo! wiſdom into folly turns
Oft, the firſt inſtant, its idea fair
To labouring thought is born. How dim our eye!
The *preſent* moment terminates our ſight;
Clouds, thick as thoſe on doomſday, drown the *next*;
We penetrate, we prophecy in vain.
Time is dealt out by particles; and each,
Ere mingled with the ſtreaming ſands of life,
By Fate's inviolable oath is ſworn
Deep ſilence, "Where eternity begins."

By nature's law, what may be, may be *now*;
There 's no prerogative in human hours.
In human hearts what bolder thought can riſe,
Than man's preſumption on to-morrow's dawn?
Where is to-morrow? In another world.
For numbers this is certain; the reverſe
Is ſure to none; and yet on this *perhaps*,
This *peradventure*, infamous for lies,
As on a rock of adamant, we build
Our mountain hopes; ſpin out eternal ſchemes,
As we the fatal ſiſters could out-ſpin,
And, big with life's futurities, expire.
Not ev'n Philander had beſpoke his ſhroud:
Nor had he cauſe; a warning was deny'd:
How many fall as ſudden, not as ſafe!
As ſudden, though for years admoniſh'd home.
Of human ills the laſt extreme beware,
Beware, Lorenzo! a *ſlow ſudden* death.
How dreadful that deliberate ſurprize!
Be wiſe to-day; 'tis madneſs to defer;
Next day the fatal precedent will plead;
Thus on, till wiſdom is puſh'd out of life.
Procraſtination is the thief of time;
Year after year it ſteals, till all are fled,
And to the mercies of a moment leaves
The vaſt concerns of an eternal ſcene.
If not ſo frequent, would not This be ſtrange?
That 'tis ſo frequent, *This* is ſtranger ſtill.
Of man's miraculous miſtakes, this bears
The palm, "That all men are about to live,"

All

For ever on the brink of being born.
All pay themſelves the compliment to think
They one day ſhall not drivel: and their pride
On this reverſion takes up ready praiſe;
At leaſt, their own; their *future* ſelves applaud;
How excellent that life they *ne'er* will lead!
Time lodg'd in their *own* hands is *folly's* vails;
That lodg'd in *fate's*, to *wiſdom* they conſign;
The thing they can't but *purpoſe*, they *poſtpone*;
'Tis not in *folly*, not to ſcorn a fool;
And ſcarce in human *wiſdom* to do more.
All promiſe is poor dilatory man,
And that through every ſtage: when young, indeed,
In full content we, ſometimes, nobly reſt,
Unanxious for *ourſelves*; and only wiſh,
As duteous ſons, our *fathers* were more wiſe.
At *thirty* man *ſuſpects* himſelf a fool;
Knows it at *forty*, and reforms his plan;
At *fifty* chides his infamous delay,
Puſhes his prudent purpoſe to *reſolve*;
In all the magnanimity of thought
Reſolves; and re-reſolves; then dies the ſame.
And why? Becauſe he thinks himſelf immortal.
All men think all men mortal, but Themſelves;
Themſelves, when ſome alarming ſhock of fate
Strikes through their wounded hearts the ſudden dread;
But their hearts wounded, like the wounded air,
Soon cloſe; where, paſt the ſhaft, no trace is found.
As from the *wing* no ſcar the ſky retains;
The parted wave no furrow from the *keel*;

So dies in human hearts the thoughts of death.
Ev'n with the tender tear which nature ſheds
O'er thoſe we love, we drop it in their grave.
Can I forget Philander? That were ſtrange!
O my full heart!—But ſhould I give it vent,
The longeſt night, though longer far, would fail,
And the *lark* liſten to my *midnight* ſong.
The ſpritely *lark's* ſhrill matin wakes the morn;
Grief's ſharpeſt thorn hard preſſing on my breaſt,
I ſtrive, with wakeful melody, to chear
The ſullen gloom, ſweet Philomel! like Thee,
And call the ſtars to liſten: every ſtar
Is deaf to mine, enamour'd of thy lay.
Yet be not vain; there are, who thine excel,
And charm through diſtant ages: wrapt in ſhade,
Priſoner of darkneſs! to the ſilent *hours*,
How often I repeat their rage divine,
To lull my griefs, and ſteal my heart from woe!
I roll their raptures, but not catch their fire.
Dark, though not blind, like thee, Mæonides!
Or, Milton! thee; ah, could I reach your ſtrain!
Or *His*, who made Mæonides our *Own*.
Man too He ſung: *immortal* man I ſing;
Oft burſts my ſong beyond the bounds of life;
What, *now*, but immortality can pleaſe?
O had *He* preſs'd his theme, purſued the track,
Which opens out of darkneſs into day!
O had he, mounted on his wing of fire,
Soar'd where I ſink, and ſung *immortal* man!
How had it bleſt mankind, and reſcued me!

NIGHT THE SECOND.

ON

TIME, DEATH, AND FRIENDSHIP.

TO THE

RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF WILMINGTON.

"*WHEN the Cock crew, he wept*"—ſmote by that eye,
Which looks on me, on all: That power, who bids
This midnight centinel, with clarion ſhrill,
Emblem of that which ſhall awake the dead,
Rouſe ſouls from ſlumber, into thoughts of *heaven*.
Shall I too weep? Where then is fortitude?
And, fortitude abandon'd, where is man?
I know the terms on which he ſees the light;
He that is born, is liſted; life is war;
Eternal war with woe. Who bears it beſt,
Deſerves it leaſt.—Of *other* themes I 'll dwell.
Lorenzo! let me turn *my* thoughts on thee,
And *thine*, on themes may profit; profit there,
Where moſt thy need. Themes, too, the genuine growth
Of dear Philander's duſt. He *thus*, though dead,
May ſtill befriend—What themes? *Time's wondrous price*,

Death, Friendſhip, and Philander's *final ſcene.*
So could I touch theſe themes, as might obtain
Thine ear, nor leave thy heart quite diſengag'd,
The good deed would delight me; half impreſs
On my dark cloud an Iris; and from grief
Call glory—Doſt thou mourn Philander's fate?
I know thou ſay'ſt it: Says thy *life* the ſame?
He mourns the dead, who lives as they deſire.
Where is that thirſt, that avarice of Time,
(O glorious avarice!) thought of death inſpires,
As rumour'd robberies endear our gold?
O *Time!* than gold more ſacred; more a load
Than lead, to fools; and fools *reputed* wiſe.
What *moment* granted man without account?
What *years* are ſquander'd, *wiſdom's* debt unpaid!
Our wealth in days, all due to *that* diſcharge.
Haſte, haſte, he lies in wait, he 's at the door,
Inſidious *Death!* ſhould his ſtrong hand arreſt,
No compoſition ſets the priſoner free.
Eternity's inexorable chain
Faſt binds; and vengeance claims the full arrear.
How late I ſhudder'd on the brink! how late
Life call'd for her laſt refuge in deſpair!
That *Time* is mine, O Mead! to thee I owe;
Fain would I pay thee with *Eternity.*
But ill my genius anſwers my deſire;
My ſickly ſong is mortal, paſt thy cure.
Accept the will;—*that* dies not with my ſtrain.
For what calls *thy* diſeaſe, Lorenzo? not
For *Eſculapian*, but for *moral* aid.

Thou

Thou think'ſt it folly to be wiſe too ſoon.
Youth is not rich in *Time*, it may be poor;
Part with it as with money, ſparing; pay
No moment, but in purchaſe of its worth;
And what its worth, aſk death-beds; they can tell.
Part with it as with life, reluctant; big
With holy hope of nobler time to come;
Time higher aim'd, ſtill nearer the great *mark*
Of men and angels; virtue more divine.
Is this our *duty*, *wiſdom*, *glory*, *gain*?
(*Theſe* heaven benign in vital union binds)
And ſport we like the natives of the bough,
When vernal ſuns inſpire? *Amuſement* reigns
Man's great demand: To trifle, is to live;
And is it then a trifle, too, to die?
Thou ſay'ſt I *preach*, Lorenzo, 'tis confeſt.
What if, for once, I preach thee quite *awake*?
Who wants *amuſement* in the flame of battle?
Is it not treaſon, to the ſoul *immortal*,
Her foes in arms, eternity the prize?
Will toys amuſe, when medicines cannot cure?
When ſpirits ebb, when life's enchanting ſcenes
Their luſtre loſe, and leſſen in our ſight,
As lands, and cities with their glittering ſpires,
To the poor ſhatter'd bark, by ſudden ſtorm
Thrown off to ſea, and ſoon to periſh there?
Will toys amuſe? No: Thrones will then be toys,
And earth and ſkies ſeem duſt upon the ſcale.
Redeem we time?—Its loſs we dearly buy.
What pleads Lorenzo for his high-priz'd ſports?

He pleads *Time's* numerous *blanks*; he loudly pleads
The ſtraw-like *trifles* on life's common ſtream.
From whom thoſe *blanks* and *trifles*, but from *thee?*
No *blank*, no *trifle*, nature made, or meant.
Virtue, or *propos'd* virtue, ſtill be thine;
This cancels thy complaint at once, *This* leaves
In *act* no *trifle*, and no *blank* in time.
This greatens, fills, immortalizes all;
This, the bleſt art of turning all to gold;
This, the *good* heart's prerogative to raiſe
A royal tribute from the pooreſt hours;
Immenſe revenue! every moment *pays*.
If nothing more than *purpoſe* in thy power;
Thy purpoſe firm, is equal to the deed:
Who does the beſt his circumſtance allows,
Does well, acts nobly; angels could no more.
Our *outward* act indeed admits reſtraint;
'Tis not in things o'er *thought* to domineer;
Guard well thy thought; our thoughts are heard in heaven.

On all important *Time*, through every age,
Though much, and warm, the wiſe have urg'd; the man
Is yet unborn, who duly weighs an hour.
"*I 've loſt a day*"—the prince who nobly cry'd
Had been an emperor without his crown;
Of Rome, ſay, rather, lord of human race:
He ſpoke, as if deputed by mankind.
So ſhould all ſpeak: So *reaſon* ſpeaks in all:
From the ſoft whiſpers of that God in man,
Why fly to folly, why to phrenzy fly,

For

For reſcue from the *bleſſing* we poſſeſs?
Time the ſupreme!—Time is Eternity;
Pregnant with all eternity can give;
Pregnant with all, that makes archangels ſmile.
Who murders time, he cruſhes in the birth
A power ethereal, only *not* ador'd.
Ah! how unjuſt to nature and himſelf,
Is thoughtleſs, thankleſs, inconſiſtent man!
Like children babbling nonſenſe in their ſports,
We cenſure nature for a ſpan too ſhort;
That ſpan too ſhort, we tax as tedious too;
Torture invention, all expedients tire,
To laſh the lingering moments into ſpeed,
And whirl us (happy riddance!) from ourſelves.
Art, brainleſs *Art!* our furious charioteer
(For *Nature's* voice unſtifled would recall)
Drives headlong towards the precipice of death;
Death, moſt our dread; death *thus* more dreadful made:
O what a riddle of abſurdity!
Leiſure is pain; takes off our chariot wheels;
How heavily we drag the load of life!
Blefl leiſure is our curſe; like that of Cain,
It makes us wander; wander earth around
To fly that tyrant, thought. As Atlas groan'd
The world beneath, we groan beneath an hour.
We cry for mercy to the next amuſement;
The next amuſement mortgages our fields;
Slight inconvenience! priſons hardly frown,
From hateful *Time* if priſons ſet us free.
Yet when *Death* kindly tenders us relief,

We call him cruel; years to moments ſhrink,
Ages to years. The teleſcope is turn'd.
To man's falſe optics (from his folly falſe)
Time, in advance, behind him hides his wings,
And ſeems to creep, decrepit with his age;
Behold him, when paſt by; what then is ſeen,
But his broad pinions ſwifter than the winds?
And all mankind, in contradiction ſtrong,
Rueful, aghaſt! cry out on his career.
Leave to thy foes theſe errors, and theſe ills;
To nature juſt, their *Cauſe* and *Cure* explore.
Not ſhort heaven's bounty, boundleſs our expence;
No niggard, nature; men are prodigals.
We *waſte*, not *uſe* our time; we breathe, not live.
Time *waſted* is exiſtence, *us'd* is life.
And *bare exiſtence*, man, to *live* ordain'd,
Wrings, and oppreſſes with enormous weight.
And why? ſince *Time* was given for uſe, not waſte,
Injoin'd to fly; with tempeſt, tide, and ſtars,
To keep his ſpeed, nor ever wait for man;
Time's uſe was doom'd a pleaſure: waſte, a pain;
That man might *feel* his error, if unſeen:
And, feeling, fly to labour for his cure;
Not, blundering, ſplit on idleneſs for eaſe.
Life's cares are comforts; ſuch by heaven deſign'd;
He that has none, muſt make them, or be wretched.
Cares are employments, and without employ
The ſoul is on a rack; the rack of *reſt*,
To ſouls moſt adverſe; action all their joy.

Here

Here then, the riddle, mark'd above, unfolds;
Then time turns torment, when man turns a fool.
We rave, we wreſtle, with *Great Nature's Plan*;
We thwart the Deity; and 'tis decreed,
Who thwart his will, ſhall contradict their own.
Hence our unnatural quarrels with ourſelves;
Our thoughts at enmity; our boſom-broil;
We puſh *Time* from us, and we wiſh him back;
Laviſh of luſtrums, and yet fond of life;
Life we think long, and ſhort; *Death* ſeek, and ſhun:
Body and ſoul, like peeviſh man and wife,
United jar, and yet are loth to part.

Oh the dark days of vanity! while here,
How taſteleſs! and how terrible, when gone!
Gone! they ne'er go; when paſt, they haunt us ſtill;
The ſpirit walks of every day deceas'd;
And ſmiles an angel, or a fury frowns.
Nor death, nor life delight us. If time *paſt*,
And time *poſſeſt*, both pain us, what can pleaſe?
That which the Deity to pleaſe ordain'd,
Time *us'd*. The man who conſecrates his hours
By vigorous effort, and an honeſt aim,
At once he draws the ſting of life and death;
He *walks with Nature*; and her paths are peace.

Our error's cauſe and cure are ſeen: See next
Time's *Nature*, *Origin*, *Importance*, *Speed*;
And thy great *Gain* from urging his career.—
All-ſenſual man, becauſe untouch'd, unſeen,
He looks on *Time* as nothing. Nothing elſe
Is truly man's; 'tis fortune's—Time 's a god.

Haſt

Haſt *thou* ne'er heard of *Time's* omnipotence? 1
For, or *againſt*, what wonders he can do!
And *will*: To ſtand blank *neuter* he diſdains.
Not on *thoſe terms* was *Time* (heaven's ſtranger!) ſer
On his important embaſſy to man.
Lorenzo! no: On the long-deſtin'd hour, 2
From everlaſting ages growing ripe,
That memorable hour of wondrous birth,
When the Dread Sire, on emanation bent,
And big with nature, riſing in his might,
Call'd forth creation (for then *Time* was born), 2
By Godhead ſtreaming through a thouſand worlds;
Not on *thoſe terms*, from the great days of heaven,
From old eternity's myſterious orb,
Was *Time* cut off, and caſt beneath the ſkies;
The ſkies, which watch him in his new abode, 2
Meaſuring his motions by revolving ſpheres;
That horologe machinery divine.
Hours, days, and months, and years, his children, pla
Like numerous wings around him, as he flies:
Or, rather, as unequal plumes, they ſhape 2
His ample pinions, ſwift as darted flame,
To gain his goal, to reach his antient reſt,
And join anew *Eternity* his ſire;
In his *immutability* to neſt,
When worlds, that count his circles *now*, unhing'd 2:
(Fate the loud ſignal ſounding) headlong ruſh
To *timeleſs* night and chaos, whence they roſe.
Why ſpur the ſpeedy? Why with levities
New wing thy ſhort, ſhort day's too rapid flight?

Know

Know'ſt thou, or what thou doſt, or what is done?
Man flies from *Time*, and *Time* from man; too ſoon
In ſad divorce this double flight muſt end:
And then, where are we? where, Lorenzo! then
Thy ſports? thy pomps?—I grant thee, in a ſtate
Not unambitious; in the *ruffled* ſhroud,
Thy Parian tomb's *triumphant arch* beneath.
Has *Death* his fopperies? Then well may *Life*
Put on her plume, and in her rainbow ſhine.
Ye *well-array'd!* ye lilies of our land!
Ye lilies *male!* who neither toil, nor ſpin,
(As ſiſter lilies *might*) if not ſo wiſe
As Solomon, more ſumptuous to the ſight!
Ye *delicate!* who nothing can ſupport,
Yourſelves moſt inſupportable! for whom
The winter roſe muſt blow, the ſun put on
A brighter beam in Leo; ſilky-ſoft
Favonius breathe ſtill ſofter, or be chid;
And other worlds ſend odours, ſauce, and ſong,
And robes, and notions, fram'd in foreign looms!
O ye Lorenzos of our age! who deem
One moment unamus'd, a miſery
Not made for feeble man! who call aloud
For every bawble drivel'd o'er by ſenſe;
For rattles, and conceits of every caſt,
For change of follies, and relays of joy,
To drag your patient through the tedious length
Of a ſhort winter's *day*—ſay, ſages! ſay,
Wit's oracles! ſay, dreamers of gay dreams!

How

How will you weather an *eternal night*,
Where ſuch expedients fail?
O treacherous *Conſcience!* while ſhe ſeems to ſleep
On *roſe* and *myrtle*, lull'd with ſyren ſong;
While ſhe ſeems, nodding o'er her charge, to drop
On headlong *Appetite* the ſlacken'd rein,
And give us up to *licence*, unrecall'd,
Unmark'd;—ſee, from behind her ſecret ſtand,
The ſly informer minutes every fault,
And her dread diary with horror fills.
Not the groſs *Act* alone employs her pen;
She reconnoitres *Fancy's* airy band,
A watchful foe! the formidable ſpy,
Liſtening, o'erhears the whiſpers of our camp:
Our dawning purpoſes of heart explores,
And ſteals our embryos of iniquity.
As all-rapacious uſurers conceal
Their doomſday-book from all-conſuming heirs;
Thus, with indulgence moſt ſevere, ſhe treats
Us ſpendthrifts of ineſtimable *Time*;
Unnoted, notes each moment miſapply'd;
In leaves more durable than leaves of braſs
Writes our whole hiſtory; which *Death* ſhall read
In every pale delinquent's private ear;
And *Judgement* publiſh; publiſh to more worlds
Than this; and endleſs age in groans reſound.
Lorenzo, *ſuch* that *Sleeper* in thy breaſt!
Such is her ſlumber; and her vengeance *ſuch*
For ſlighted counſel; *ſuch* thy future peace!
And think'ſt thou ſtill thou canſt be wiſe *too ſoon?*

But why on *Time* ſo laviſh is my ſong?
On this great *theme* kind *Nature* keeps a ſchool,
To teach her ſons herſelf. Each night we die,
Each morn are born anew: Each day, a life!
And ſhall we kill each day? If *Trifling* kills;
Sure *Vice* muſt butcher. O what heaps of ſlain
Cry out for vengeance on us! *Time* deſtroy'd
Is *Suicide*, where more than *Blood* is ſpilt.
Time flies, death urges, knells call, heaven invites,
Hell threatens: All exerts; in effort, all;
More than creation labours!—labours *more?*
And is there in creation what, amidſt
This tumult univerſal, wing'd diſpatch,
And ardent energy, ſupinely yawns?—
Man ſleeps; and *Man* alone; and *Man*, whoſe fate,
Fate irreverſible, intire, extreme,
Endleſs, hair-hung, breeze-ſhaken, o'er the gulph
A moment trembles; drops! and *Man*, for whom
All elſe is in alarm! *Man*, the ſole cauſe
Of this ſurrounding ſtorm! and yet he ſleeps,
As the ſtorm rock'd to reſt.—Throw *Years* away?
Throw *Empires*, and be blameleſs. Moments ſeize;
Heaven 's on their wing: A moment we may wiſh,
When worlds want wealth to buy. Bid *Day* ſtand ſtill,
Bid him drive back his car, and reimport
The period paſt, re-give the given hour.
Lorenzo, *more* than miracles we want;
Lorenzo—O for yeſterdays to come!
Such is the language of the man *awake*;
His ardour ſuch, for what *oppreſſes* thee.

And is his ardour vain, Lorenzo? No;
That *more* than miracle the gods indulge;
To-day is *Yeſterday* return'd; return'd
Full power'd to cancel, expiate, raiſe, adorn,
And reinſtate us on the Rock of peace.
Let it not ſhare its predeceſſor's fate;
Nor, like its elder ſiſters, die a fool.
Shall it evaporate in fume? fly off
Fuliginous, and ſtain us deeper ſtill?
Shall we be poorer for the plenty pour'd?
More wretched for the clemencies of heaven?
Where ſhall I find *Him?* Angels! tell me where.
You know him: He is near you: Point him out:
Shall I ſee glories beaming from his brow?
Or trace his footſteps by the riſing flowers?
Your golden wings, *now* hovering o'er him, ſhed
Protection; now, are waving in applauſe
To that bleſt ſon of foreſight! lord of fate!
That awful independent on *To-morrow!*
Whoſe *work is done*; who triumphs in the *Paſt*;
Whoſe *Yeſterdays* look backwards with a ſmile;
Nor, like the Parthian, wound him as they fly;
That common, but opprobrious lot! paſt hours,
If not by guilt, yet wound us by their flight,
If folly bounds our proſpect by the grave,
All feeling of futurity benumb'd;
All god-like paſſion for eternals quencht;
All reliſh of realities expir'd;
Renounc'd all correſpondence with the ſkies;
Our freedom chain'd; quite wingleſs our deſire;

In ſenſe dark-priſon'd all that ought to ſoar;
Prone to the centre; crawling in the duſt;
Diſmounted every great and glorious aim;
Embruted every faculty divine;
Heart-bury'd in the rubbiſh of the world.
The world, that gulph of ſouls, immortal ſouls,
Souls elevate, angelic, wing'd with fire
To reach the diſtant ſkies, and triumph there
On thrones, which ſhall not mourn their maſters chang'd;
Though we from *Earth*; *Ethereal*, they that fell.
Such veneration due, O man, to man.
Who venerate themſelves, the world deſpiſe:
For what, gay friend! is this *eſcutcheon'd* world,
Which hangs out Death in one eternal night;
A night, that glooms us in the noon-tide ray,
And wraps our thought, at banquets, in the ſhroud?
Life's little ſtage is a ſmall eminence,
Inch-high the grave above; that home of man,
Where dwells the multitude: We gaze around;
We read their monuments; we ſigh; and while
We ſigh, we ſink; and *are* what we deplor'd;
Lamenting, or lamented, all our lot!
Is death at diſtance? No: He has been on thee,
And given ſure earneſt of his final blow.
Thoſe hours that lately ſmil'd, where are they now?
Pallid to thought, and ghaſtly! drown'd, all drown'd
In that great deep, which nothing diſembogues!
And, dying, they bequeath'd thee ſmall renown.
The reſt are on the wing: How fleet their flight!
Already has the fatal train took fire;

A mo-

A moment, and the world 's blown up *to thee*;
The ſun is darkneſs, and the ſtars are duſt.
'Tis greatly wiſe to talk with our paſt hours;
And aſk them, what report they bore to heaven;
And how they might have borne more welcome news.
Their anſwers form what men *Experience* call;
If *Wiſdom's* friend, her beſt; if not, worſt foe.
O reconcile them! Kind *Experience* cries,
" There 's nothing here, but what as nothing weighs;
" The more our joy, the more we know it vain;
" And by ſucceſs are tutor'd to deſpair."
Nor *is* it only thus, but *muſt* be ſo.
Who knows not this, though grey, is ſtill a child.
Looſe then from earth the graſp of fond deſire,
Weigh anchor, and ſome happier clime explore.
Art thou ſo moor'd thou canſt not diſengage,
Nor give thy thoughts a ply to future ſcenes?
Since, by *Life's* paſſing breath, blown up from earth,
Light, as the ſummer's duſt, we take in air
A moment's giddy flight, and fall again;
Join the dull maſs, increaſe the trodden ſoil,
And ſleep, till earth herſelf ſhall be no more;
Since *then* (as emmets, their ſmall world o'erthrown)
We, ſore amaz'd, from out earth's ruins crawl,
And riſe to fate extreme of foul or fair,
As man's own choice (controuler of the ſkies!)
As man's deſpotic will, perhaps *one* hour,
(O how omnipotent is time!) decrees;
Should not each *warning* give a ſtrong alarm?
Warning, far leſs than that of boſom torn

From

From boſom, bleeding o'er the ſacred dead!
Should not each *dial* ſtrike us as we paſs,
Portentous, as the *written wall*, which ſtruck,
O'er midnight bowls, the proud Aſſyrian pale,
Ere-while high-flufht with inſolence and wine?
Like *that*, the dial ſpeaks; and points to thee,
Lorenzo! loth to break thy banquet up:
"O man, thy kingdom is departing from thee;
"And, while it laſts, is emptier than my ſhade."
Its ſilent language ſuch: nor need'ſt thou call
Thy *Magi*, to decypher what it means.
Know, like the Median, fate is in thy walls:
Doſt aſk, *How? Whence?* Belſhazzar-like, amaz'd?
Man's make incloſes the ſure ſeeds of death;
Life feeds the murderer: Ingrate! he thrives
On her own meal, and then his nurſe devours.
But here, Lorenzo, the deluſion lies;
That *ſolar ſhadow*, as it meaſures life,
It life reſembles too: life ſpeeds away
From point to point, though ſeeming to ſtand ſtill.
The cunning fugitive is ſwift by ſtealth:
Too ſubtle is the movement to be ſeen;
Yet ſoon man's hour is up, and we are gone.
Warnings point out our danger; Gnomons, time:
As *theſe* are uſeleſs when the ſun is ſet:
So *thoſe*, but when more glorious *Reaſon* ſhines.
Reaſon ſhould judge in all; in reaſon's eye,
That ſedentary ſhadow travels hard.
But ſuch our gravitation to the wrong,
So prone our hearts to whiſper what we wiſh,

'Tis later with the wife than he 's aware:
A Wilmington goes ſlower than the ſun:
And all mankind miſtake their time of day;
Ev'n age itſelf. Freſh hopes are hourly ſown
In furrow'd brows. To gentle life's deſcent
We ſhut our eyes, and think it is a plain.
We take fair days in winter, for the ſpring;
And turn our bleſſings into bane. Since oft
Man muſt *compute* that age he cannot *feel*,
He ſcarce believes he 's older for his years.
Thus, at life's lateſt eve, we keep in ſtore
One diſappointment ſure, to crown the reſt;
The diſappointment of a promis'd hour.

On *This*, or ſimilar, Philander! thou
Whoſe mind was moral, as the preacher's tongue;
And ſtrong, to wield all ſcience, worth the name;
How often we talk'd down the ſummer's ſun,
And cool'd our paſſions by the breezy ſtream!
How often thaw'd and ſhorten'd winter's eve,
By conflict kind, that ſtruck out latent truth,
Beſt found, ſo ſought; to the *Recluſe* more coy!
Thoughts diſentangle paſſing o'er the lip;
Clean runs the thread; if not, 'tis thrown away,
Or kept to tie up nonſenſe for a ſong;
Song, faſhionably fruitleſs; ſuch as ſtains
The *Fancy*, and unhallow'd *Paſſion* fires;
Chiming her ſaints to Cytherea's fane.

Know'ſt thou, Lorenzo! what a friend contains;
As bees *mixt Nectar* draw from fragrant flowers,
So men from Friendſhip, *Wiſdom* and *Delight*;

Twins ty'd by nature, if they part, they die.
Haſt thou no friend to ſet thy mind abroach?
Good Senſe will ſtagnate. Thoughts ſhut up want air,
And ſpoil, like bales unopen'd to the ſun.
Had thought been all, ſweet ſpeech had been deny'd;
Speech, thought's canal! ſpeech, thought's criterion too!
Thought in the mine, may come forth gold, or droſs;
When coin'd in word, we know its *real* worth.
If ſterling, ſtore it for thy future uſe;
'Twill buy thee benefit; perhaps, renown.
Thought, too, deliver'd, is the more poſſeſt;
Teaching, we learn; and, giving, we retain
The births of intellect; when dumb, forgot.
Speech ventilates our intellectual fire;
Speech burniſhes our mental magazine;
Brightens, for ornament; and whets, for uſe.
What numbers, ſheath'd in erudition, lie,
Plung'd to the hilts in venerable tomes,
And ruſted in; who might have borne an edge,
And play'd a ſprightly beam, if born to ſpeech;
If born bleſt heirs of half their mother's tongue!
'Tis thought's exchange, which, like th' alternate puſh
Of waves conflicting, breaks the learned ſcum,
And defecates the ſtudent's ſtanding pool.
In *Contemplation* is his proud reſource?
'Tis poor, as proud, by *Converſe* unſuſtain'd.
Rude thought runs wild in *Contemplation's* field;
Converſe, the menage, breaks it to the bit
Of due reſtraint; and *emulation's* ſpur

Gives graceful energy, by rivals aw'd.
'Tis converſe qualifies for ſolitude;
As exerciſe, for ſalutary reſt.
By that untutor'd, *Contemplation* raves;
And *Nature's* fool, by *Wiſdom* is undone.
Wiſdom, though richer than Peruvian mines,
And ſweeter than the ſweet ambroſial hive,
What is ſhe, but the means of *Happineſs?*
That unobtain'd, than folly more a fool;
A melancholy fool, without her bells.
Friendſhip, the means of wiſdom, richly gives
The precious end, which makes our wiſdom wiſe.
Nature, in zeal for human amity,
Denies, or damps, an *undivided* joy.
Joy is an import; joy is an exchange;
Joy flies monopoliſts: it calls for *Two*;
Rich fruit! heaven-planted! never pluckt by *One*.
Needful anxiliars are our friends, to give
To *ſocial* man true reliſh of himſelf.
Full on ourſelves, deſcending in a line,
Pleaſure's bright beam is feeble in delight:
Delight intenſe is taken by rebound;
Reverberated pleaſures fire the breaſt.
Celeſtial *Happineſs*, whene'er ſhe ſtoops
To viſit earth, one ſhrine the goddeſs finds,
And one alone, to make her ſweet amends
For abſent heaven—the boſom of a friend;
Where heart meets heart, reciprocally ſoft,
Each other's pillow to repoſe divine.
Beware the counterfeit; in *Paſſion's* flame

Hearts melt, but melt like ice, ſoon harder froze.
True love ſtrikes root in *Reaſon*; paſſion's foe:
Virtue alone entenders us for life:
I wrong her much—entenders us for ever:
Of *Friendſhip's* faireſt fruits, the fruit moſt fair
Is *Virtue* kindling at a rival fire,
And, *emulouſly*, rapid in her race.
O the ſoft enmity! endearing ſtrife!
This carries friendſhip to her noon-tide point,
And gives the rivet of eternity.
From *Friendſhip*, which outlives my former themes,
Glorious ſurvivor of old *Time* and *Death!*
From Friendſhip, thus, that flower of heavenly ſeed;
The wiſe extract earth's moſt Hyblean bliſs,
Superior wiſdom, crown'd with ſmiling joy.
But for whom bloſſoms this Elyſian *flower?*
Abroad They find, who cheriſh it at *Home*.
Lorenzo! pardon what my love extorts,
An honeſt love, and not afraid to frown.
Though choice of follies faſten on the *Great*,
None clings more obſtinate than fancy fond
That ſacred friendſhip is their eaſy prey;
Caught by the wafture of a golden lure,
Or faſcination of a high-born ſmile.
Their ſmiles, the *Great*, and the *Coquet*, throw out
For Others hearts, tenacious of their Own;
And we no leſs of ours, when *ſuch* the bait.
Ye fortune's cofferers! Ye powers of wealth!
Can gold gain friendſhip? Impudence of hope!
As well mere man an angel might beget.

Love, and Love only, is the loan for love.
Lorenzo! pride repreſs; nor hope to find
A friend, but what has found a friend in Thee.
All like the purchaſe; few the price will pay;
And this makes friends ſuch miracles below.
What if (ſince daring on ſo nice a theme)
I ſhew thee friendſhip Delicate, as Dear,
Of tender violations apt to die?
Reſerve will wound it; and *Diſtruſt*, deſtroy.
Deliberate in all things with thy friend.
But ſince friends grow not thick on every bough,
Nor every friend unrotten at the core;
Firſt, on thy friend, deliberate with Thyſelf;
Pauſe, ponder, ſift; not Eager in the choice,
Nor Jealous of the choſen; Fixing, Fix;
Judge before friendſhip, then confide till death.
Well, for thy friend; but nobler far for Thee;
How gallant danger for earth's higheſt prize!
A friend is worth all hazards we can run.
"Poor is the friendleſs maſter of a world:
"A world in purchaſe for a friend is gain."
So ſung He (angels hear that angel ſing!
Angels from friendſhip gather half their joy)
So ſung Philander, as his friend went round
In the rich *ichor*, in the generous blood
Of Bacchus, purple god of joyous wit,
A brow ſolute, and ever-laughing eye.
He drank long health, and virtue, to his friend;
His friend, who warm'd him more, who more inſpir'd.
Friendſhip 's the wine of life; but friendſhip *new*

(Not

(Not ſuch was His) is neither Strong, nor Pure.
O! for the bright complexion, cordial warmth,
And elevating ſpirit, of a friend,
For twenty ſummers ripening by my ſide;
All feculence of falſehood long thrown down;
All ſocial virtues riſing in his ſoul;
As cryſtal clear; and ſmiling as they riſe!
Here Nectar flows; it ſparkles in our ſight;
Rich to the taſte, and genuine from the heart
High-flavour'd bliſs for gods! on earth how rare!
On earth how *loſt!*—Philander is no more.
Think'ſt thou the theme intoxicates my ſong?
Am I too warm?—Too warm I cannot be.
I lov'd him much; but now I love him more.
Like birds, whoſe beauties languiſh, half-conceal'd,
Till, mounted on the wing, their gloſſy plumes
Expanded ſhine with azure, green, and gold;
How bleſſings brighten as they take their flight!
His flight Philander took; his upward flight,
If ever ſoul aſcended. Had he dropt,
(That eagle genius!) O had he let fall
One feather as he flew; I, then, had wrote,
What friends might flatter; prudent foes forbear;
Rivals ſcarce damn; and Zoilus reprieve.
Yet what I can, I muſt: it were profane
To quench a glory lighted at the ſkies,
And caſt in ſhadows his illuſtrious cloſe.
Strange! the theme moſt affecting, moſt ſublime,
Momentous moſt to man, ſhould ſleep unſung!
And yet it ſleeps, by genius unawak'd,

Painim or *Chriſtian*; to the bluſh of wit.
Man's higheſt triumph! man's profoundeſt fall!
The *Death-bed* of the juſt! is yet undrawn
By mortal hand; it merits a Divine:
Angels ſhould paint it, angels ever *There*;
There, on a poſt of honour, and of joy.
Dare I preſume, then? but Philander bids;
And glory tempts, and inclination calls.
Yet am I ſtruck; as ſtruck the ſoul, beneath
Aërial *Groves* impenetrable gloom;
Or, in ſome mighty *Ruin's* ſolemn ſhade;
Or, gazing by pale lamps on *high-born Duſt*,
In vaults; thin courts of poor unflatter'd kings;
Or, at the midnight *Altar's* hallow'd flame.
Is it religion to proceed? I pauſe—
And enter, aw'd, the temple of my theme.
Is it his death-bed? No: it is his ſhrine:
Behold him, there, juſt riſing to a god.
The chamber where the good man meets his fate,
Is privileg'd beyond the common walk
Of *virtuous* life, quite in the verge of heaven.
Fly, ye profane! If not, draw near with awe,
Receive the bleſſing, and adore the chance,
That threw in this Betheſda your diſeaſe;
If unreſtor'd by This, deſpair your cure.
For, *Here*, reſiſtleſs demonſtration dwells;
A death-bed 's a detector of the heart.
Here tir'd *diſſimulation* drops her maſque,
Through life's grimace, that miſtreſs of the ſcene!
Here Real, and Apparent, are the Same.

You

You ſee the *Man*; you ſee his hold on heaven;
If ſound his virtue; as Philander's, ſound.
Heaven waits not the laſt moment; owns her friends
On this ſide death; and points them out to men,
A lecture, ſilent, but of ſovereign power!
To vice, confuſion; and to virtue, peace.
Whatever farce the boaſtful hero plays,
Virtue alone has majeſty in death;
And greater ſtill, the more the tyrant frowns.
Philander! he ſeverely frown'd on thee.
" No warning given! Unceremonious fate!
" A ſudden ruſh from life's meridian joy!
" A wrench from all we *love!* from all we *are!*
" A reſtleſs bed of pain! a plunge opaque
" Beyond conjecture! feeble *Nature's* dread!
" Strong *Reaſon's* ſhudder at the dark unknown!
" A ſun extinguiſht! a juſt-opening grave!
" And Oh! the laſt, laſt, what? (can words expreſs?
" Thought reach it?) the laſt—*Silence* of a friend!"
Where are thoſe horrors, that amazement, where,
This hideous group of ills, which *ſingly* ſhock,
Demand from man?—I thought him man till *now*.
Through nature's wreck, through vanquiſht agonies,
(Like the ſtars ſtruggling through this midnight gloom)
What gleams of joy! what more than human peace!
Where, the frail mortal? the poor abject worm?
No, not in death, the *Mortal* to be found.
His conduct is a legacy for All.
Richer than *Mammon's* for his ſingle heir.
His comforters he comforts; Great in ruin,

With

With unreluctant grandeur, *gives*, not *yields*
His ſoul ſublime; and cloſes with his fate.
How our hearts burnt within us at the ſcene!
Whence this brave bound o'er limits fixt to man?
His God ſuſtains him in his final hour!
His final hour brings glory to his God!
Man's glory heaven vouchſafes to call her own.
We gaze, we weep; mixt tears of grief and joy!
Amazement ſtrikes! devotion burſts to flame!
Chriſtians Adore! and *Infidels* Believe.
As ſome tall tower, or lofty mountain's brow,
Detains the ſun, Illuſtrious from its height;
While riſing vapours, and deſcending ſhades,
With damps, and darkneſs, drown the ſpacious vale;
Undampt by doubt, undarken'd by deſpair,
Philander, thus, auguſtly rears his head,
At that black hour, which general horror ſheds
On the low level of th' inglorious throng:
Sweet *Peace*, and heavenly *Hope*, and humble *Joy*,
Divinely beam on his exalted ſoul;
Deſtruction gild, and crown him for the ſkies,
With incommunicable luſtre, bright.

NIGHT THE THIRD.

NARCISSA.

TO

HER GRACE THE DUCHESS OF PORTLAND.

" Ignoſcenda quidem, ſcirent ſi ignoſcere manes."

VIRG.

FROM *Dreams*, where thought in fancy's maze runs mad,
To *Reaſon*, that heaven-lighted lamp in man,
Once more I wake; and at the deſtin'd hour,
Punctual as lovers to the moment ſworn,
I keep my aſſignation with my woe.
O! loſt to virtue, loſt to manly thought,
Loſt to the noble ſallies of the ſoul!
Who think it ſolitude, to be Alone.
Communion ſweet! communion large and high!
Our *Reaſon*, *Guardian Angel*, and our *God!*
Then neareſt Theſe, when Others moſt remote;
And All, ere long, ſhall be remote, *but* Theſe.
How dreadful, *Then*, to meet them all alone,
A ſtranger! unacknowledg'd! unapprov'd!
Now woo them; wed them; bind them to thy breaſt;
To win thy wiſh, creation has no more.

Or if we wiſh a *fourth*, it is a Friend—
But friends, how mortal, dangerous the deſire!
Take Phœbus to yourſelves, ye baſking bards!
Inebriate at fair fortune's fountain-head;
And reeling through the wilderneſs of joy;
Where *Senſe* runs ſavage, broke from *Reaſon's* chain,
And ſings falſe peace, till ſmother'd by the pall.
My fortune is unlike; unlike my ſong;
Unlike the deity my ſong invokes.
I to *Day's* ſoft-ey'd ſiſter pay my court,
(Endymion's rival!) and her aid implore;
Now firſt implor'd in ſuccour to the *Muſe*.
Thou, who didſt lately borrow * Cynthia's form,
And modeſtly forego thine Own! O Thou,
Who didſt thyſelf, at midnight hours, inſpire!
Say, why not Cynthia patroneſs of ſong?
As thou her creſcent, ſhe thy character
Aſſumes; ſtill more a goddeſs by the change.
Are there demurring wits, who dare diſpute
This revolution in the world *inſpir'd*?
Ye train Pierian! to the *Lunar* ſphere,
In ſilent hour, addreſs your ardent call
For aid immortal; leſs her brother's right.
She, with the ſpheres harmonious, nightly leads
The mazy dance, and hears their matchleſs ſtrain,
A ſtrain for gods, deny'd to mortal ear.
Tranſmit it heard, thou ſilver queen of heaven!
What title, or what name, endears thee moſt?
Cynthia! Cyllené! Phœbe!—or doſt hear
With

* At the duke of Norfolk's maſquerade.

With higher guſt, fair Portland of the ſkies!
Is that the ſoft inchantment calls thee down,
More powerful than of old Circean charm?
Come; but from heavenly banquets with thee bring
The ſoul of ſong, and whiſper in my ear
The theft divine; or in propitious dreams
(For dreams are Thine) transfuſe it through the breaſt
Of thy firſt votary—But not thy laſt;
If, like thy *Nameſake*, thou art ever kind.
And kind thou wilt be; kind on ſuch a theme;
A theme ſo like thee, a quite *lunar* theme,
Soft, modeſt, melancholy, female, fair!
A theme that roſe all pale, and told my ſoul,
'Twas *Night*; on her fond hopes perpetual night;
A night which ſtruck a damp, a deadlier damp,
Than that which ſmote me from Philander's tomb.
Narciſſa follows, ere his tomb is clos'd.
Woes cluſter; rare are *ſolitary* woes;
They love a train, they tread each other's heel;
Her death invades *his* mournful right, and claims
The grief that ſtarted from my lids for Him:
Seizes the faithleſs, alienated tear,
Or ſhares it, ere it falls. So frequent death,
Sorrow he *more* than cauſes, he confounds;
For human ſighs his rival ſtrokes contend,
And make diſtreſs, diſtraction. Oh Philander!
What was thy fate? A double fate to me;
Portent, and pain! a menace, and a blow!
Like the black raven hovering o'er my peace,
Not leſs a bird of omen, than of prey.

It call'd Narciſſa long before her hour;
It call'd her tender ſoul, by break of bliſs,
From the firſt bloſſom, from the buds of joy;
Thoſe few our noxious fate unblaſted leaves
In this inclement clime of human life.
Sweet harmoniſt! and Beautiful as ſweet!
And Young as beautiful! and Soft as young!
And Gay as ſoft! and Innocent as gay!
And Happy (if aught Happy *here*) as good!
For fortune fond had built her neſt on high.
Like birds quite exquiſite of note and plume,
Transfixt by *fate* (who loves a lofty mark),
How from the ſummit of the grove ſhe fell,
And left it unharmonious! All its charms
Extinguiſht in the wonders of her ſong!
Her ſong ſtill vibrates in my raviſht ear,
Still melting there, and with voluptuous pain
(O to forget her!) thrilling through my heart!
Song, Beauty, Youth, Love, Virtue, Joy! this group
Of bright ideas, flowers of paradiſe,
As yet unforfeit! in one blaze we bind,
Kneel, and preſent it to the ſkies; as All
We gueſs of heaven: and *theſe* were all her own.
And ſhe was mine; and I was—*was!*—moſt bleſt—
Gay title of the deepeſt miſery!
As bodies grow more ponderous, robb'd of life;
Good loſt weighs more in grief, than gain'd in joy.
Like bloſſom'd trees o'erturn'd by vernal ſtorm,
Lovely in death the beauteous ruin lay;
And if in death ſtill lovely, lovelier There;

Far

Far lovelier! pity ſwells the tide of love.
And will not the ſevere excuſe a ſigh?
Scorn the proud man that is aſham'd to weep;
Our tears *indulg'd* indeed deſerve our ſhame.
Ye that e'er loſt an angel! pity me.

Soon-as the luſtre languiſht in her eye,
Dawning a dimmer day on human ſight;
And on her cheek, the reſidence of ſpring,
Pale omen ſat; and ſcatter'd fears around
On all that ſaw (and who would ceaſe to gaze,
That once had ſeen?) with haſte, parental haſte,
I flew, I ſnatch'd her from the rigid north,
Her native bed, on which bleak Boreas blew,
And bore her nearer to the ſun; the ſun
(As if the ſun could envy) checkt his beam,
Deny'd his wonted ſuccour; nor with more
Regret beheld her drooping, than the bells
Of lilies; faireſt lilies, not ſo fair!

Queen lilies! and ye painted populace!
Who dwell in fields, and lead ambroſial lives;
In morn and evening dew, your beauties bathe,
And drink the ſun; which gives your cheeks to glow,
And out-bluſh (*mine* excepted) every fair;
You gladlier grew, ambitious of her hand,
Which often cropt your odours, incenſe meet
To thought ſo pure! Ye lovely fugitives!
Coeval race with man! for man you ſmile;
Why not ſmile *at* him too? You ſhare indeed
His ſudden paſs; but not his conſtant pain.

So

So man is made, nought miniſters delight,
By what his glowing paſſions can engage;
And glowing paſſions, bent on aught below,
Muſt, ſoon or late, with anguiſh turn the ſcale;
And anguiſh, after rapture, how ſevere!
Rapture? Bold man! who tempt'ſt the wrath divine,
By plucking fruit denied to mortal taſte,
While *here*, preſuming on the rights of heaven.
For tranſport doſt thou call on every hour,
Lorenzo? At thy friend's expence, be wiſe;
Lean not on earth; 'twill pierce thee to the heart;
A broken reed, at beſt; but, oft, a ſpear;
On its ſharp point peace bleeds, and hope expires.
Turn, hopeleſs thought! turn from her:—Thought repell'd
Reſenting rallies, and wakes every woe.
Snatch'd ere thy prime! and in thy bridal hour!
And when kind fortune, with thy lover, ſmil'd!
And when high flavour'd thy freſh opening joys!
And when blind man pronounc'd thy bliſs complete!
And on a foreign ſhore; where ſtrangers wept!
Strangers to Thee; and, more ſurpriſing ſtill,
Strangers to Kindneſs, wept: their eyes let fall
Inhuman tears; ſtrange tears! that trickled down
From marble hearts! obdurate tenderneſs!
A tenderneſs that call'd them more ſevere;
In ſpite of nature's ſoft perſuaſion, ſteel'd;
While *nature* melted, *ſuperſtition* rav'd;
That mourn'd the dead; and *this* denied a grave.

Their

Their ſighs incens'd; ſighs foreign to the will!
Their will the *tiger* ſuck'd, outrag'd the ſtorm.
For, oh! the curſt ungodlineſs of zeal!
While *ſinful fleſh* relented, *ſpirit* nurſt
In blind *infallibility's* embrace,
The *fainted ſpirit* petrify'd the breaſt;
Deny'd the charity of duſt, to ſpread
O'er duſt! a charity their dogs enjoy.
What could I do? What ſuccour? What reſource?
With pious ſacrilege, a grave I ſtole;
With impious piety, that grave I wrong'd;
Short in my duty; coward in my grief!
More like her murderer, than friend, I crept,
With ſoft-ſuſpended ſtep, and muffled deep
In midnight darkneſs, *whiſper'd* my laſt ſigh.
I *whiſper'd* what ſhould echo through their realms;
Nor writ her name, whoſe tomb ſhould pierce the ſkies.
Preſumptuous fear! How durſt I dread her foes,
While nature's loudeſt dictates I obey'd?
Pardon neceſſity, bleſt ſhade! Of grief
And indignation rival burſts I pour'd;
Half execration mingled with my prayer;
Kindled at man, while I his God ador'd;
Sore grudg'd the ſavage land her ſacred duſt;
Stampt the curſt ſoil; and with humanity
(Denied Narciſſa) wiſh'd them all a grave.
Glows my reſentment into guilt? What guilt
Can equal violations of the dead?
The dead how ſacred! Sacred is the duſt
Of this heaven-labour'd form, erect, divine!

This heaven-aſſum'd majeſtic robe of earth,
He deign'd to wear, who hung the vaſt expanſe
With azure bright, and cloath'd the ſun in gold.
When every paſſion ſleeps that can offend;
When ſtrikes us every motive that can melt;
When man can wreak his rancour *uncontrol'd*,
That ſtrongeſt curb on inſult and ill-will;
Then, ſpleen to *duſt*? the duſt of innocence?
An angel's duſt?—This Lucifer tranſcends;
When he contended for the patriarch's bones,
'Twas not the ſtrife of malice, but of pride;
The ſtrife of pontiff pride, not pontiff gall.
For leſs than This is ſhocking in a race
Moſt *wretched*, but from ſtreams of mutual love;
And *uncreated*, but for love divine;
And, but for love divine, this moment, *loſt*,
By fate reſorb'd, and ſunk in endleſs night.
Man hard of heart to man! Of horrid things
Moſt horrid! 'Mid ſtupendous, highly ſtrange!
Yet oft his courteſies are ſmoother wrongs;
Pride brandiſhes the favours He confers,
And contumelious his humanity:
What then his vengeance? Hear it not, ye ſtars!
And thou, pale moon! turn paler at the ſound;
Man is to man the ſoreſt, ſureſt ill.
A previous blaſt foretels the riſing ſtorm;
O'erwhelming turrets threaten ere they fall;
Volcanos bellow ere they diſembogue;
Earth trembles ere her yawning jaws devour;
And ſmoke betrays the wide-conſuming fire:

Ruin from man is moſt conceal'd when near,
And ſends the dreadful tidings in the blow.
Is this the flight of fancy? Would it were!
Heaven's Sovereign ſaves all beings, but himſelf,
That hideous ſight, a *naked* human heart.
Fir'd is the Muſe? And let the Muſe be fir'd:
Who not inflam'd, when what he ſpeaks, he feels,
And in the nerve moſt tender, in his friends?
Shame to mankind! Philander had his foes:
He felt the truths I ſing, and I in Him.
But He, nor I, feel more: paſt ills, Narciſſa!
Are ſunk in Thee, thou recent wound of heart!
Which bleeds with other cares, with other pangs;
Pangs numerous, as the numerous ills that ſwarm'd
O'er thy diſtinguiſh'd fate, and, cluſtering There
Thick as the locuſts on the land of Nile,
Made death more deadly, and more dark the grave.
Reflect (if not forgot my touching tale)
How was each circumſtance with aſpics arm'd?
An aſpic, Each! and All, an Hydra woe:
What ſtrong Herculean virtue could ſuffice?——
Or is it virtue to be conquer'd Here?
This hoary cheek a train of tears bedews;
And each tear mourns its own *diſtinct* diſtreſs;
And each diſtreſs, diſtinctly mourn'd, demands
Of grief ſtill more, as heighten'd by the whole.
A grief like *this* proprietors excludes:
Not friends alone ſuch obſequies deplore;
They make Mankind the mourner; carry ſighs
Far as the fatal *Fame* can wing her way;

And turn the gayeſt thought of gayeſt age,
Down their right channel, through the vale of death!
The vale of death! that huſh'd Cimmerian vale,
Where *darkneſs*, brooding o'er unfiniſh'd fates,
With raven wing incumbent, waits the day
(Dread day!) that interdicts all future change!
That ſubterranean world, that land of ruin!
Fit walk, Lorenzo, for proud human thought!
There let my thought expatiate, and explore
Balſamic truths, and healing ſentiments,
Of all moſt wanted, and moſt welcome, *here*.
For gay Lorenzo's ſake, and for thy own,
My ſoul! "The fruits of dying friends ſurvey;
"Expoſe the *vain* of life; weigh life and death;
"Give death his eulogy; thy fear ſubdue;
"And labour that firſt palm of noble minds,
"A manly ſcorn of terror from the tomb."
This harveſt reap from thy Narciſſa's grave.
As poets feign'd from Ajax' ſtreaming blood
Aroſe, with grief inſcrib'd, a mournful flower;
Let wiſdom bloſſom from my mortal wound.
And *firſt*, of dying friends; what fruit from theſe
It brings us more than triple aid; an aid
To chaſe our *thoughtleſſneſs*, *fear*, *pride*, and *guilt*.
Our dying friends come o'er us like a cloud,
To damp our brainleſs ardors; and abate
That glare of life, which often blinds the wiſe.
Our dying friends are pioneers, to ſmooth
Our rugged paſs to death; to break thoſe bars
Of terror, and abhorrence, nature throws

C

Croſs our obſtructed way; and, thus to make
Welcome, as *ſafe*, our port from every ſtorm.
Each friend by fate ſnatch'd from us, is a plume
Pluck'd from the wing of human vanity,
Which makes us ſtoop from our aërial heights,
And, dampt with omen of our own deceaſe,
On drooping pinions of ambition lower'd,
Juſt ſkim earth's ſurface, ere we break it up,
O'er putrid earth to ſcratch a little duſt,
And ſave the world a nuiſance. Smitten friends
Are angels ſent on errands full of love;
For us they languiſh, and for us they die:
And ſhall they languiſh, ſhall they die, in vain?
Ungrateful, ſhall we grieve their hovering ſhades,
Which wait the revolution in our hearts?
Shall we diſdain their ſilent, ſoft addreſs;
Their poſthumous advice, and pious prayer?
Senſeleſs, as herds that graze their hallow'd graves,
Tread under-foot their agonies and groans;
Fruſtrate their anguiſh, and deſtroy their deaths?
Lorenzo! no; the thought of death indulge;
Give it its wholeſome empire! let it reign,
That kind chaſtiſer of thy ſoul in joy!
Its reign will ſpread thy glorious conqueſts far,
And ſtill the tumults of thy ruffled breaſt:
Auſpicious æra! golden days, begin!
The thought of death ſhall, like a god, inſpire.
And why not think on death? Is life the theme
Of every thought? and wiſh of every hour?
And ſong of every joy? Surpriſing truth!

The beaten ſpaniel's fondneſs not ſo ſtrange.
To wave the numerous *ills* that ſeize on life
As their own property, their lawful prey;
Ere man has meaſur'd half his weary ſtage,
His *luxuries* have left him no reſerve,
No maiden reliſhes, unbroach'd delights;
On cold ſerv'd repetitions he ſubſiſts,
And in the taſteleſs *preſent* chews the *paſt*;
Diſguſted chews, and ſcarce can ſwallow down.
Like laviſh anceſtors, his earlier years
Have diſinherited his future hours,
Which ſtarve on *orts*, and *glean* their former field.
Live ever here, Lorenzo!—ſhocking thought!
So ſhocking, they who wiſh, diſown it too;
Diſown from ſhame, what they from folly crave.
Live ever in the womb, nor ſee the light?
For what live ever here?—With labouring ſtep
To tread our former footſteps? Pace the round
Eternal? To climb life's worn, heavy wheel,
Which draws up nothing new? To beat, and beat
The beaten track? To bid each wretched day
The former mock? To ſurfeit on the *ſame*,
And yawn our joys? Or thank a miſery
For change, though ſad? To ſee what we have ſeen?
Hear, till unheard, the ſame old ſlabber'd tale?
To taſte the taſted, and at each return
Leſs taſteful? O'er our palates to decant
Another vintage? Strain a flatter year,
Through loaded veſſels, and a laxer tone?
machines to grind earth's waſted fruits!

Ill-groun

Ill-ground, and worſe concocted! Load, not life!
The *rational* foul kennels of exceſs!
Still-ſtreaming thorough-fares of dull debauch!
Trembling each gulp, leſt death ſhould ſnatch the bowl.
Such of our *fine-ones* is the wiſh refin'd!
So would they have it; elegant deſire!
Why not invite the bellowing ſtalls, and wilds?
But ſuch examples might their riot awe.
Through want of virtue, that is, want of thought,
(Though on *bright thought* they father all their flights)
To what are they reduc'd? To love, and hate,
The ſame vain world; to cenſure, and eſpouſe,
This painted ſhrew of life, who calls them fool
Each moment of each day; to flatter bad
Through dread of worſe; to cling to this rude rock,
Barren, *to them*, of good, and ſharp with ills,
And hourly blacken'd with impending ſtorms,
And infamous for wrecks of human hope—
Scar'd at the gloomy gulph, that yawns beneath.
Such are their triumphs! ſuch their pangs of joy!
'Tis time, high time, to ſhift this diſmal ſcene.
This *hugg'd*, this *hideous* ſtate, what art can cure?
One only; but that one, what all may reach;
Virtue—ſhe, wonder-working goddeſs! charms
That *rock* to bloom; and tames the *painted ſhrew*;
And, what will more ſurprize, Lorenzo! gives
To life's ſick, nauſeous *iteration*, change;
And ſtraightens nature's circle to a line.
Believ'ſt thou this, Lorenzo? lend an ear,
A patient ear, thou 'lt bluſh to diſbelieve.

A languid, leaden, iteration reigns,
And ever muſt, o'er thoſe, whoſe joys are joys
Of ſight, ſmell, taſte: the cuckow-ſeaſons ſing
The ſame dull note to ſuch as nothing prize,
But what thoſe ſeaſons, from the teeming earth,
To doating *ſenſe* indulge. But nobler minds,
Which reliſh fruits unripen'd by the *ſun*,
Make their days various; various as the dyes
On the dove's neck, which wanton in *his* rays.
On minds of dove-like innocence poſſeſt,
On lighten'd minds, that baſk in virtue's beams,
Nothing hangs tedious, nothing *old* revolves
In *that*, for which they long; for which they live.
Their glorious efforts, wing'd with heavenly hope,
Each riſing morning ſees ſtill higher riſe;
Each bounteous dawn its novelty preſents
To worth maturing, *new* ſtrength, luſtre, fame;
While nature's circle, like a chariot-wheel
Rolling *beneath* their elevated aims,
Makes their fair proſpect fairer every hour;
Advancing *virtue*, in a line to *bliſs*;
Virtue, which Chriſtian motives beſt inſpire!
And *bliſs*, which Chriſtian ſchemes alone enſure?
And ſhall we then, for virtue's ſake, commence
Apoſtates; and turn infidels for joy?
A truth it is, few doubt, but fewer truſt,
"He ſins againſt *this* life, who ſlights the *next*."
What is this life? How few their favourite know!
Fond in the dark, and blind in our embrace,
By paſſionately loving life, we make

Lov'd

Lov'd life unlovely; hugging her to death.
We give to Time Eternity's regard;
And, dreaming, take our paſſage for our port.
Life has no value as an end, but means;
An end deplorable! a means divine!
When 'tis our all, 'tis nothing; worſe than nought;
A neſt of pains: when held as nothing, much:
Like ſome fair humouriſts, life is moſt enjoy'd,
When courted leaſt; moſt worth, when diſeſteem'd:
Then 'tis the ſeat of comfort, rich in peace;
In proſpect richer far; important! awful!
Not to be mention'd, but with ſhouts of praiſe!
Not to be thought on, but with tides of joy!
The mighty baſis of eternal bliſs!
Where now the *barren rock?* the *painted ſhrew?*
Where now, Lorenzo! life's *eternal round?*
Have I not made my triple promiſe good?
Vain *is* the world; but only to the vain.
To what compare we then this varying ſcene,
Whoſe worth ambiguous riſes, and declines?
Waxes, and wanes? (In all propitious, *Night*
Aſſiſts me here) compare it to the moon;
Dark in herſelf, and indigent; but rich
In *borrow'd* luſtre from a higher ſphere.
When groſs guilt interpoſes, labouring earth,
O'erſhadow'd, mourns a deep eclipſe of joy;
Her joys, at brighteſt, pallid, to that font
Of full effulgent glory, whence they flow.
Nor is that glory diſtant: Oh Lorenzo!
A good man, and an angel! theſe between

How

How thin the barrier! what divides their fate?
Perhaps a moment, or perhaps a year;
Or, if an age, it is a moment ſtill;
A moment, or eternity's forgot.
Then be, what once they were, who now are gods;
Be what Philander was, and claim the ſkies.
Starts timid nature at the gloomy paſs?
The *ſoft tranſition* call it; and be chear'd:
Such it is often, and why not to Thee?
To hope the beſt, is pious, brave, and wiſe;
And may itſelf *procure*, what it *preſumes*.
Life is much flatter'd, death is much traduc'd;
Compare the rivals, and the kinder crown.
"*Strange competition!*"—True, Lorenzo! ſtrange!
So little *Life* can caſt into the ſcale.
Life makes the ſoul dependent on the duſt;
Death gives her wings to mount above the ſpheres.
Through chinks, ſtyl'd organs, dim *life* peeps at light;
Death burſts th' involving cloud, and all is day;
All eye, all ear, the diſembody'd power.
Death has feign'd evils, *nature* ſhall not feel;
Life, ills ſubſtantial, *wiſdom* cannot ſhun.
Is not the mighty *mind*, that ſon of heaven!
By tyrant *life* dethron'd, impriſon'd, pain'd?
By *death* enlarg'd, ennobled, deify'd?
Death but intombs the body; *life* the ſoul.
"Is *death* then guiltleſs? How he marks his way
"With dreadful waſte of what deſerves to ſhine!
"Art, genius, fortune, elevated power!
"With various luſtres *theſe* light up the world,

"Which

" Which *death* puts out, and darkens human race."
I grant, Lorenzo! this indictment juſt:
The ſage, peer, potentate, king, conqueror!
Death humbles theſe; more barbarous *life*, the *man*.
Life is the triumph of our mouldering clay;
Death, of the ſpirit infinite! divine!
Death has no dread, but what frail *life* imparts;
Nor *life* true joy, but what kind *death* improves.
No bliſs has *life* to boaſt, till death can give
Far greater; *life* 's a debtor to the grave,
Dark lattice! letting in eternal day.
Lorenzo! bluſh at *fondneſs* for a *life*,
Which ſends celeſtial ſouls on errands vile,
To cater for the ſenſe; and ſerve at boards,
Where every ranger of the wilds, perhaps
Each reptile, juſtly claims our upper hand.
Luxurious feaſt! a ſoul, a ſoul immortal,
In all the dainties of a brute bemir'd!
Lorenzo! bluſh at *terror* for a *death*,
Which gives thee to repoſe in feſtive bowers,
Where nectars ſparkle, angels miniſter,
And more than angels ſhare, and raiſe, and crown,
And eternize, the birth, bloom, burſts of bliſs.
What need I more? O *death*, the palm is thine.
Then welcome, death! thy dreaded harbingers,
Age, and *diſeaſe*; diſeaſe, though long my gueſt;
That plucks my nerves, thoſe tender ſtrings of life;
Which, pluck'd a little more, will toll the bell,
That calls my few friends to my funeral;
Where feeble nature drops, perhaps, a tear,

While

While reaſon and religion, better taught,
Congratulate the dead, and crown his tomb
With wreath triumphant. Death is victory;
It binds in chains the raging ills of life:
Luſt and *ambition*, *wrath* and *avarice*,
Dragg'd at his chariot-wheel, applaud his power.
That ills corroſive, cares importunate,
Are not *immortal* too, O death! is thine.
Our day of diſſolution!—name it right;
'Tis our great pay-day; 'tis our harveſt, rich
And ripe: what though the ſickle, ſometimes keen,
Juſt ſcars us as we reap the golden grain?
More than thy balm, O Gilead! heals the wound.
Birth's feeble cry, and *death's* deep diſmal groan,
Are ſlender tributes low-tax'd nature pays
For mighty gain: the gain of each, a life!
But O! the laſt the former ſo tranſcends,
Life dies, compar'd; *Life* lives beyond the grave.
And feel I, *death!* no joy from thought of thee?
Death, the great counſellor, who man inſpires
With every nobler thought, and fairer deed!
Death, the deliverer, who reſcues man!
Death, the rewarder, who the reſcued crowns!
Death, that abſolves my birth; a curſe without it!
Rich *death*, that realizes all my cares,
Toils, virtues, hopes; without it a chimera!
Death, of all pain the period, not of joy;
Joy's *ſource*, and *ſubject*, ſtill ſubſiſt unhurt;
One, in my ſoul; and one, in her great Sire;
Though the four winds were warring for my duſt.

Yes,

Yes, and from winds, and waves, and central night,
Though priſon'd there, my duſt too I reclaim,
(To duſt when drop proud nature's proudeſt ſpheres)
And live *intire*. Death is the crown of life:
Were death deny'd, poor man would live in vain;
Were death deny'd, to live would not be life;
Were death deny'd, ev'n fools would wiſh to die.
Death wounds to cure: we fall; we riſe; we reign!
Spring from our fetters; faſten in the ſkies;
Where blooming Eden withers in our ſight:
Death gives us more than was in Eden loſt.
This king of terrors is the prince of peace.
When ſhall I die to vanity, pain, death?
When ſhall I *die*?—When ſhall I live for ever?

NIGHT THE FOURTH.

THE CHRISTIAN TRIUMPH.

CONTAINING

Our only Cure for the Fear of Death; and proper Sentiments of that ineſtimable Bleſſing.

TO

THE HONOURABLE MR. YORKE.

A Much-indebted Muſe, O Yorke! intrudes.
Amid the ſmiles of fortune, and of youth,
Thine ear is patient of a ſerious ſong,
How deep implanted in the breaſt of man
The dread of death! I ſing its ſovereign cure.
Why ſtart at death? Where is he? Death arriv'd,
Is paſt; not come, or gone, he 's never *here*.
Ere *hope*, *ſenſation* fails; black-boding man
Receives, not *ſuffers*, death's tremendous blow.
The knell, the ſhroud, the mattock, and the grave;
The deep damp vault, the darkneſs, and the worm;
Theſe are the bugbears of a winter's eve,
The terrors of the living, not the dead.
Imagination's fool, and *error's* wretch,
Man makes a death, which nature never made;
Then on the point of his own fancy falls;
And feels a thouſand deaths, in fearing one.

But were death frightful, what has *age* to fear?
If prudent, age ſhould meet the friendly foe,
And ſhelter in his hoſpitable gloom.
I ſcarce can meet a monument, but holds
My younger; every date cries—"Come away."
And what recalls me? Look the world around,
And tell me what: the wiſeſt cannot tell.
Should any born of woman give his thought
Full range, on juſt *diſlike's* unbounded field;
Of things, the vanity; of men, the flaws;
Flaws in the *beſt*; the many, flaw all o'er;
As *leopards*, ſpotted, or, as Ethiops, dark;
Vivacious *ill*; *good* dying immature;
(How immature, Narciſſa's marble tells!)
And at his death bequeathing endleſs pain;
His heart, though bold, would ſicken at the ſight,
And ſpend itſelf in ſighs, for *future* ſcenes.
But grant to life (and juſt it is to grant
To *lucky* life) ſome perquiſites of joy;
A time there is, when, like a thrice-told tale,
Long-rifled life of ſweet can yield no more,
But from our *comment* on the comedy,
Pleaſing *reflections* on parts well ſuſtain'd,
Or purpos'd *emendations* where we fail'd,
Or hopes of plaudits from our candid Judge,
When, on their exit, ſouls are bid unrobe,
To ſhift *fortune* back her tinſel, and her plume,
And drop this maſk of fleſh behind the ſcene.
With me, that time is come; my world is dead;
A new world riſes, and new manners reign;

Foreign

Foreign comedians, a ſpruce band! arrive,
To puſh me from the ſcene, or hiſs me there.
What a pert race ſtarts up! the ſtrangers gaze,
And I at them; my neighbour is unknown;
Nor that the worſt: Ah me! the dire effect
Of loitering here, of death defrauded long;
Of old ſo gracious (and let that ſuffice),
My very maſter knows me not.—
Shall I dare ſay, peculiar is the fate?
I 've been ſo long remember'd, I 'm forgot.
An object ever preſſing dims the ſight,
And hides behind its ardour to be ſeen.
When in his courtiers ears I pour my plaint,
They drink it as the nectar of the great;
And ſqueeze my hand, and beg me come to-n
Refuſal! canſt thou wear a ſmoother form?
Indulge me, nor conceive I drop my theme:
Who cheapens life, abates the *Fear of Death*:
Twice told the period ſpent on ſtubborn Troy,
Court favour, yet untaken, I beſiege;
Ambition's ill-judg'd effort to be rich.
Alas! ambition makes my little leſs;
Embittering the poſſeſt: Why wiſh for more?
Wiſhing, of all employments, is the worſt;
Philoſophy's reverſe; and health's decay!
Were I as plump as ſtall'd theology,
Wiſhing would waſte me to this ſhade again.
Were I as wealthy as a South-Sea dream,
Wiſhing is an expedient to be poor.
Wiſhing, that conſtant *hectic* of a fool;

Caught at a court; purg'd off by purer air,
And ſimpler diet; gifts of rural life!
Bleſt be that hand divine, which gently laid
My heart at reſt, beneath this humble ſhed.
The world 's a ſtately bark, on dangerous ſeas,
With pleaſure ſeen, but boarded at our peril;
Here, on a ſingle plank, thrown ſafe aſhore,
I hear the tumult of the diſtant throng,
As that of ſeas remote, or dying ſtorms:
And meditate on ſcenes, more ſilent ſtill;
Purſue my theme, and fight the *Fear of Death*.
Here, like a ſhepherd gazing from his hut,
Touching his reed, or leaning on his ſtaff,
Eager *ambition's* fiery chace I ſee;
I ſee the circling hunt, of noiſy men,
Burſt law's incloſure, leap the mounds of right,
Purſuing, and purſued, each other's prey;
As wolves, for rapine; as the fox, for wiles;
Till *Death*, that mighty hunter, earths them all.
Why all this toil for triumphs of an hour?
What though we wade in wealth, or ſoar in fame?
Earth's higheſt ſtation ends in, "Here he lies,"
And "duſt to duſt" concludes her nobleſt ſong.
If this ſong lives, poſterity ſhall know
One, though in Britain born, with courtiers bred,
Who thought ev'n gold might come a day too late;
Nor on his ſubtle death-bed plann'd his ſcheme
For future vacancies in church or ſtate;
Some avocation deeming it—to die,

Unbit by rage canine of *dying rich*;
Guilt's blunder! and the loudeſt laugh of hell.
O my coëvals! remnants of yourſelves!
Poor human ruins, tottering o'er the grave!
Shall we, ſhall aged men, like aged trees,
Strike deeper their vile root, and cloſer cling,
Still more enamour'd of this wretched ſoil?
Shall our pale, wither'd hands, be ſtill ſtretch'd out,
Trembling, at once, with eagerneſs and age?
With avarice and convulſions, graſping hard?
Graſping at air! for what has earth beſide?
Man wants but little; nor that little, long;
How ſoon muſt he reſign his very duſt,
Which frugal nature lent him for an hour!
Years *unexperienc'd* ruſh on numerous ills;
And ſoon as man, *expert* from time, has found
The *key* of life, it opes the gates of death.
When in this vale of years I backward look,
And miſs ſuch numbers, numbers too of ſuch,
Firmer in health, and greener in their age,
And ſtricter on their guard, and fitter far,
To play life's ſubtle game, I ſcarce believe
I ſtill ſurvive: and am I fond of life,
Who ſcarce can think it poſſible, I live?
Alive by miracle! or, what is next,
Alive by Mead! if I am ſtill alive,
Who long have bury'd what gives life to live,
Firmneſs of nerve, and energy of thought.
Life's lee is not more *ſhallow*, than *impure*,

And *vapid*; *Senſe* and *Reaſon* ſhew the door,
Call for my bier, and point me to the duſt.
O thou great arbiter of life and death!
Nature's immortal, immaterial ſun!
Whoſe all-prolific beam late call'd me forth
From darkneſs, teeming darkneſs, where I lay
The worm's inferior, and, in rank, beneath
The duſt I tread on, high to bear my brow,
To drink the ſpirit of the golden day,
And triumph in exiſtence; and could know
No motive, but my bliſs; and haſt ordain'd
A riſe in bleſſing! with the *Patriarch's* joy,
Thy call I follow to the land *unknown*;
I truſt in thee, and know in whom I truſt;
Or life, or death, is equal; neither weighs:
All weight in this—O let me live to thee!
Though *nature's* terrors, *thus*, may be repreſt;
Still frowns grim *Death*; guilt points the tyrant's ſpear.
And whence all human guilt? From death forgot.
Ah me! too long I ſet at nought the ſwarm
Of friendly warnings, which around me flew;
And ſmil'd, unſmitten: ſmall my cauſe to ſmile!
Death's admonitions, like ſhafts upwards ſhot,
More dreadful by delay, the longer ere
They ſtrike our hearts, the deeper is their wound;
O think how deep, Lorenzo! *here* it ſtings:
Who can appeaſe its anguiſh? how it burns!
What hand the barb'd, invenom'd, thought can draw?
What healing hand can pour the balm of peace,
And turn my ſight undaunted on the tomb?
With

With joy,—with grief, that *healing hand* I ſee;
Ah! too conſpicuous! it is fix'd on high.
On *high?*—What means my phrenſy? I blaſpheme;
Alas! how *low!* how far beneath the ſkies!
The ſkies it form'd; and now it bleeds for *me*—
But bleeds the balm I want—yet ſtill it *bleeds*;
Draw the dire ſteel—ah no! the dreadful bleſſing
What heart or can ſuſtain, or dares forego?
There hangs all human hope; that nail ſupports
The falling univerſe: that gone, we drop;
Horror receives us, and the diſmal wiſh
Creation had been ſmother'd in her birth—
Darkneſs his curtain, and his bed the duſt;
When ſtars and ſun are duſt beneath his throne!
In heaven itſelf can ſuch indulgence dwell?
O what a groan was there! a groan *not His*.
He ſeiz'd our dreadful right; the load ſuſtain'd;
And heav'd the mountain from a guilty world.
A thouſand worlds, *ſo* bought, were bought too dear;
Senſations *new* in angels boſoms riſe;
Suſpend their ſong; and make a pauſe in bliſs.
O for *their* ſong; to reach my lofty theme!
Inſpire me, *Night!* with all thy tuneful ſpheres;
Whilſt I with *ſeraphs* ſhare ſeraphic themes,
And ſhew to men the dignity of man;
Leſt I blaſpheme my ſubject with my ſong.
Shall *pagan* pages glow celeſtial flame,
And *chriſtian* languiſh? on our hearts, not heads,
Falls the foul infamy: my heart! awake.
What can awake thee, unawak'd by *this*,

" Expended deity on human weal?"
Feel the *great truths*, which burſt the tenfold night
Of *heathen* error, with a golden flood
Of endleſs day: to feel, is to be fir'd;
And to believe, Lorenzo! is to feel.

Thou moſt indulgent, moſt tremendous Power!
Still more tremendous, for thy wondrous love!
That arms, which awe more aweful, thy commands;
And foul tranſgreſſion dips in ſevenfold night!
How our hearts tremble at thy love immenſe!
In love immenſe, inviolably juſt!
Thou, rather than thy *juſtice* ſhould be ſtain'd,
Didſt ſtain the *Croſs*; and work of wonders far
The greateſt, that thy deareſt far might bleed.

Bold thought! ſhall I dare ſpeak it, or repreſs?
Should man more *execrate*, or *boaſt*, the guilt
Which rous'd ſuch vengeance? which ſuch love inflam'd?
O'er guilt (how mountainous!) with out-ſtretch'd arms,
Stern *juſtice* and ſoft-ſmiling *love* embrace,
Supporting, in full majeſty, thy throne,
When ſeem'd its majeſty to need ſupport,
Or *that*, or *man*, inevitably loſt;
What, but the *fathomleſs* of thought divine,
Could labour ſuch expedient from deſpair,
And reſcue *both?* both reſcue! both exalt!
O how are both exalted by the *deed!*
The wondrous deed! or ſhall I call it *more?*
A wonder in Omnipotence itſelf!
A myſtery no leſs to gods than men!

Not *thus*, our infidels th' *Eternal* draw,
A God all o'er, conſummate, abſolute,
Full-orb'd, in his whole round of rays complete:
They ſet at odds heaven's jarring attributes;
And, with one excellence, another wound;
Maim heaven's perfection, break its equal beams,
Bid *mercy* triumph over—God himſelf,
Undeify'd by their opprobrious praiſe:
A God *all* mercy, is a God unjuſt.

Ye brainleſs wits! ye baptiz'd infidels!
Ye worſe for mending! waſh'd to fouler ſtains!
The ranſom was paid down; the fund of heaven,
Heaven's inexhauſtible, exhauſted fund,
Amazing, and amaz'd, pour'd forth the price,
All price beyond: though curious to compute,
Archangels fail'd to caſt the mighty ſum:
Its value vaſt, ungraſp'd by minds *create*,
For ever hides, and glows, in the *Supreme*.

And was the ranſom paid? it was: and paid
(What can exalt the bounty more?) for *you*.
The ſun beheld it—no, the ſhocking ſcene
Drove back his chariot: *Midnight* veil'd his face;
Not ſuch as *this*; not ſuch as nature makes;
A *midnight* nature ſhudder'd to behold;
A *midnight* new! a dread eclipſe (without
Oppoſing ſpheres) from her Creator's frown!
Sun! didſt thou fly thy Maker's pain? Or ſtart
At that enormous load of human guilt,
Which bow'd his bleſſed head; o'erwhelm'd his croſs
Made groan the centre; burſt earth's marble womb,

With pangs, ſtrange pangs! deliver'd of her dead?
Hell howl'd; and heaven that hour let fall a tear;
Heaven wept, that men might ſmile! heaven bled, that man
Might never die! ———

And is devotion virtue? 'Tis *compell'd.*
What heart of ſtone but glows at thoughts like theſe?
Such contemplations mount us; and ſhould mount
The mind ſtill higher; nor ever glance on man,
Unraptur'd, uninflam'd.—Where roll my thoughts
To reſt from wonders? other wonders riſe;
And ſtrike where'er they roll: my ſoul is caught:
Heaven's ſovereign bleſſings, cluſtering from the croſs,
Ruſh on her, in a throng, and cloſe her round,
The priſoner of amaze!—In his bleſt *life*
I ſee the *path*, and in his *death* the *price*,
And in his great *aſcent* the *proof* ſupreme
Of immortality.—And did he riſe?
Hear, O ye nations! hear it, O ye dead!
He roſe! he roſe! he burſt the bars of death.
Lift up your heads, ye everlaſting gates!
And give the king of glory to come in.
Who is the king of glory? he who left
His throne of glory, for the pang of death!
Lift up your heads, ye everlaſting gates!
And give the king of glory to come in.
Who is the king of glory? he who ſlew
The ravenous foe, that gorg'd all human race!
The king of glory, he, whoſe glory fill'd
Heaven with amazement at his love to man;

And with divine complacency beheld
Powers moſt illumin'd, wilder'd in the theme.
The theme, the joy, how then ſhall *man* ſuſtain?
On the burſt gates! cruſh'd ſting! demoliſh'd throne!
Laſt graſp! of vanquiſh'd death. Shout earth and heaven!
This *ſum of good* to man. *Whoſe* nature, then,
Took wing, and mounted with him from the tomb!
Then, then, I roſe; then firſt *humanity*
Triumphant paſt the cryſtal ports of light,
(Stupendous gueſt!) and ſeiz'd eternal youth,
Seiz'd in *our* name. E'er ſince, 'tis blaſphemous
To call man mortal. Man's mortality
Was, then, transferr'd to death; and heaven's duration
Unalienably ſeal'd to this frail frame,
This child of duſt—Man, all-immortal! hail;
Hail, heaven! all laviſh of ſtrange gifts to man!
Thine all the glory; man's the boundleſs bliſs.
Where am I rapt by this triumphant theme,
On chriſtian joy's exulting wing, above
Th' Aonian mount!—Alas! ſmall cauſe for joy!
What if to pain immortal? if extent
Of being, to preclude a cloſe of woe?
Where, then, my boaſt of immortality?
I boaſt it ſtill, though cover'd o'er with guilt;
For guilt, not innocence, his life he pour'd;
'Tis guilt alone can juſtify his death;
Nor that, unleſs his death can juſtify
Relenting guilt in heaven's indulgent ſight.
If, ſick of folly, I relent; he writes
My name in heaven, with that inverted ſpear

(A ſpear

(A ſpear deep-dipt in blood!) which pierc'd his ſide,
And open'd there a font for all mankind,
Who ſtrive, who combat crimes, to drink, and live:
This, only *this*, ſubdues the *fear of death*.
And what is *this?*—Survey the wondrous cure:
And at each ſtep, let higher wonder riſe!
"Pardon for infinite offence! and pardon
"Through means that ſpeak its value infinite!
"A pardon bought with blood! with blood divine!
"With blood divine of him, I made my foe!
"Perſiſted to provoke! though woo'd, and aw'd,
"Bleſt, and chaſtis'd, a flagrant rebel ſtill!
"A rebel, 'midſt the thunders of his throne!
"Nor I alone! a rebel univerſe!
"My ſpecies up in arms! not one exempt!
"Yet for the fouleſt of the foul, he dies,
"Moſt joy'd, for the redeem'd from deepeſt guilt!
"As if our race were held of higheſt rank;
"And Godhead dearer, as more kind to man!"
Bound, every heart! and every boſom, burn!
O what a ſcale of miracles is here!
Its loweſt round, high planted on the ſkies;
Its towering ſummit loſt beyond the thought
Of man or angel! O that I could climb
The wonderful aſcent, with equal praiſe!
Praiſe! flow for ever (if aſtoniſhment
Will give thee leave): my praiſe! for ever flow;
Praiſe ardent, cordial, conſtant, to high heaven
More fragrant, than Arabia ſacrific'd,
And all her ſpicy mountains in a flame.

So

So dear, ſo due to heaven, ſhall *praiſe* deſcend,
With her ſoft plume (from *plauſive* angels wing
Firſt pluck'd by man) to tickle mortal ears,
Thus diving in the pockets of the great?
Is *praiſe* the perquiſite of every paw,
Though black as hell, that grapples well for gold?
Oh love of gold! thou meaneſt of amours!
Shall *praiſe* her odours waſte on virtue's dead,
Embalm the baſe, perfume the ſtench of guilt,
Earn dirty bread by waſhing Æthiops fair,
Removing filth, or ſinking it from ſight,
A ſcavenger in *ſcenes*, where *vacant* poſts,
Like gibbets yet untenanted, expect
Their future ornaments? From courts and thrones,
Return, apoſtate *praiſe!* thou vagabond!
Thou proſtitute! to thy firſt love return,
Thy firſt, thy greateſt, once unrival'd theme.
There flow redundant; like Meander flow,
Back to thy fountain; to that Parent Power,
Who gives the tongue to ſound, the thought to ſoar,
The ſoul to *be*. Men homage pay to men,
Thoughtleſs beneath whoſe dreadful eye they bow
In mutual awe profound of clay to clay,
Of guilt to guilt; and turn their back on thee,
Great Sire! whom thrones celeſtial ceaſeleſs ſing:
To proſtrate angels, an amazing ſcene!
O the preſumption of man's awe for man!
Man's Author! End! Reſtorer! Law! and Judge!
Thine, all; day thine, and thine this gloom of night
With all her wealth, with all her radiant worlds!

Who

What, night eternal, but a frown from thee?
What, heaven's meridian glory, but thy ſmile?
And ſhall not *praiſe* be thine, not human praiſe?
While heaven's high hoſt on *hallelujahs* live?
O may I breathe no longer, than I breathe
My ſoul in praiſe to Him, who gave my ſoul,
And all her infinite of proſpect fair,
Cut through the ſhades of hell, *great Love!* by thee
Oh moſt Adorable! moſt Unador'd!
Where ſhall that praiſe begin, which ne'er ſhould end?
Where'er I turn, what claim on all applauſe!
How is *night's* ſable mantle labour'd o'er,
How richly wrought with attributes divine!
What *wiſdom* ſhines! what *love!* this midnight pomp,
This gorgeous arch, with golden worlds inlay'd!
Built with divine ambition! nought to thee;
For others this profuſion: Thou, apart,
Above! beyond! Oh tell me, mighty Mind!
Where art thou? Shall I dive into the *deep?*
Call to the *ſun*, or aſk the roaring *winds*,
For their Creator? Shall I queſtion loud
The *thunder*, if in that th' Almighty dwells?
Or holds He furious *ſtorms* in ſtreighten'd reins,
And bids fierce *whirlwinds* wheel his rapid car?
What mean theſe queſtions?—Trembling I retract;
My proſtrate ſoul adores the *preſent* God:
Praiſe I a diſtant deity? He tunes
My voice (if tun'd); the nerve, that writes, ſuſtains:
Wrapt in his being, I reſound his praiſe:
But though paſt *all* diffus'd, without a ſhore,

His eſſence; *local* is his throne (as meet),
To gather the diſperſt (as ſtandards call
The liſted from afar): to fix a point,
A central point, collective of his ſons,
Since *finite* every nature but his own.

The nameleſs *He*, whoſe nod is *nature's* birth
And *nature's* ſhield, the ſhadow of his hand;
Her diſſolution, his ſuſpended ſmile!
The great *Firſt-Laſt!* pavilion'd high he ſits,
In darkneſs from exceſſive ſplendor borne,
By gods unſeen, unleſs through luſtre loſt.
His glory, to created glory, bright,
As that to central horrors; he looks down
On all that ſoars; and ſpans immenſity.

Though *night* unnumber'd worlds unfolds to
Boundleſs creation! what art thou? A beam,
A mere effluvium of his majeſty:
And ſhall an atom of this atom-world
Mutter, in duſt and ſin, the theme of heaven?
Down to the centre ſhould I ſend my thought
Through beds of glittering ore, and glowing ge
Their beggar'd blaze wants luſtre for my lay;
Goes out in darkneſs: if, on towering wing,
I ſend it through the boundleſs vault of ſtars!
The ſtars, though rich, what droſs their gold to
Great! good! wiſe! wonderful! eternal King!
If to thoſe *conſcious ſtars* thy throne around,
Praiſe ever-pouring, and imbibing bliſs;
And aſk their ſtrain; they want it, *more* they w
Poor their abundance, humble their ſublime,

La

Languid their energy, their ardour cold,
Indebted ſtill, their higheſt rapture burns;
Short of its mark, defective, though divine.
Still more—This theme is man's, and man's alone;
Their vaſt appointments reach it not: they ſee
On earth a bounty not indulg'd on high;
And *downward* look for heaven's ſuperior praiſe!
Firſt-born of Ether! high in fields of light!
View man, to ſee the glory of your God!
Could angels envy, they had envy'd *here*;
And ſome *did* envy; and the reſt, though gods,
Yet ſtill gods *unredeem'd* (there triumphs man,
Tempted to weigh the duſt againſt the ſkies)
They leſs would *feel*, though more adorn, my theme.
They ſung *Creation* (for in that they ſhar'd):
How roſe in melody, that child of love!
Creation's great ſuperior, man! is thine;
Thine is *redemption*; they juſt gave the key:
'Tis thine to raiſe, and eternize, the ſong;
Though human, yet divine; for ſhould not *this*
Raiſe man o'er man, and kindle ſeraphs *here?*
Redemption! 't was creation more ſublime;
Redemption! 't was the labour of the ſkies;
Far *more* than labour—It was *death* in heaven.
A truth ſo ſtrange! 't were bold to think it true;
If not far bolder ſtill to diſbelieve!
Here pauſe, and ponder: was there death in heaven?
What then on earth? On earth, which ſtruck the blow?
Who ſtruck it? Who?—O how is *man* enlarg'd
Seen through this medium! how the pigmy towers!

How counterpois'd his origin from duſt!
How counterpois'd, to duſt his ſad return!
How voided his vaſt diſtance from the ſkies!
How near he preſſes on the ſeraph's wing!
Which is the ſeraph? Which the born of clay?
How this demonſtrates, through the thickeſt cloud
Of guilt, and clay condens'd, the ſon of heaven!
The *double* ſon; the made, and the re-made!
And ſhall heaven's double property be loſt?
Man's double madneſs only can deſtroy.
To man the bleeding croſs has promis'd *all*;
The bleeding croſs has ſworn eternal grace;
Who gave his life, what grace ſhall He deny?
O ye! who, from this *Rock of ages*, leap,
Apoſtates, plunging headlong in the deep!
What cordial joy, what conſolation ſtrong,
Whatever winds ariſe, or billows roll,
Our intereſt in the maſter of the ſtorm!
Cling *there*, and in wreck'd nature's ruins *ſmile*;
While vile apoſtates *tremble* in a calm.

Man! know thyſelf. All wiſdom centres there:
To none man ſeems ignoble, but to man;
Angels that grandeur, men o'er-look, admire:
How long ſhall human nature be *their* book,
Degenerate mortal! and *unread* by Thee?
The beam dim *reaſon* ſheds ſhews wonders There;
What high contents! Illuſtrious faculties!
But the grand *comment*, which diſplays at full
Our human height, ſcarce fever'd from divine,
By heaven compos'd, was publiſh'd on the *Croſs*.

Who

Who looks on That, and ſees not in himſelf
An awful ſtranger, a terreſtrial god?
A glorious partner with the Deity
In that high attribute, immortal life?
If a God bleeds, he bleeds not for a worm:
Gaze, and, as I gaze, my mounting ſoul
Catches ſtrange fire, Eternity! at Thee;
And drops the world—or rather, more enjoys:
How chang'd the face of nature! how improv'd!
What ſeem'd a chaos, ſhines a glorious world,
Or, what a world, an Eden; heighten'd all!
'Tis another ſcene! another ſelf!
And ſtill another, as time rolls along;
And that a *ſelf* far more illuſtrious ſtill.
Beyond long ages, yet roll'd up in ſhades
Unpierc'd by bold conjecture's keeneſt ray,
What evolutions of ſurpriſing fate!
How nature opens, and receives my ſoul
In boundleſs walks of raptur'd thought! where gods
Encounter and embrace me! What new births
Of ſtrange adventure, foreign to the ſun;
Where what now charms, perhaps, whate'er exiſts,
Old *time*, and fair *creation*, are forgot!
Is this extravagant? Of man we form
Extravagant conception, to be juſt:
Conception unconfin'd wants wings to reach him:
Beyond its reach, the Godhead only, more.
He, the great Father! kindled at one flame
The world of rationals; one ſpirit pour'd
From ſpirit's aweful fountain: pour'd himſelf

Through

Through all their ſouls; but not in equal ſtream,
Profuſe, or frugal, of th' aſpiring God,
As his wiſe plan demanded; and when paſt
Their various trials in their various ſpheres,
If they *continue* rational, as made,
Reſorbs them all into Himſelf again;
His throne their centre, and his ſmile their crown.

Why doubt we, then, the *glorious truth* to ſing,
Though yet *unſung*, as deem'd, perhaps, too bold?
Angels are men of a ſuperior kind;
Angels are men in lighter habit clad,
High o'er celeſtial mountains wing'd in flight;
And men are angels, loaded for an hour,
Who wade this miry vale, and climb with pain,
And ſlippery ſtep, the bottom of the ſteep.
Angels their failings, mortals have their praiſe;
While *Here*, of corps ethereal, ſuch enroll'd,
And ſummon'd to the *glorious Standard* ſoon,
Which flames eternal crimſon through the ſkies.
Nor are our *brothers* thoughtleſs of their kin,
Yet abſent; but not abſent from their love.
Michael has fought our battles; Raphael ſung
Our triumphs; Gabriel on our errands flown,
Sent by the Sovereign: and are theſe, O man!
Thy friends, thy warm allies? and Thou (ſhame be
The cheek to cinder!) rival to the brute?

Religion 's All. Deſcending from the ſkies
To wretched man, the goddeſs in her left,
Holds out *this* world, and, in her right, the *next*;
Religion! the ſole voucher man is man;

Support

/hat deadly poiſon has thy nature drunk;
'o nature undebauch'd no ſhock ſo great;
ature's *firſt* wiſh is *endleſs happineſs*;
nnihilation is an after-thought,
monſtrous wiſh, unborn till virtue dies.
nd, oh! what depth of horror lies incloſ'd!
or non-exiſtence no man ever wiſh'd,
ut, firſt, he wiſh'd the Deity deſtroy'd.
If ſo; what words are dark enough to draw
hy picture true? The darkeſt are too fair.
eneath what baleful planet, in what hour
f deſperation, by what fury's aid,
ı what infernal poſture of the ſoul,
ll hell invited, and all hell in joy
t ſuch a birth, a birth ſo near of kin,
id thy foul *fancy* whelp ſo black a ſcheme
f *hopes* abortive, *faculties* half-blown,
nd *deities begun*, reduc'd to duſt?
There 's nought (thou ſay'ſt) but one eternal flux
f feeble eſſences, tumultuous driven
hrough *time's* rough billows into *night's* abyſs.
ıy, in this rapid *tide* of human ruin,
there no *rock*, on which man's toſſing thought
an reſt from terror, dare his fate ſurvey,
nd boldly think it *ſomething* to be born?
mid ſuch hourly wrecks of being fair,
there no central, all-ſuſtaining *baſe*,
ll-realizing, all-connecting *power*,
/hich, as it call'd forth all things, can *recall*,
nd force *deſtruction* to refund her ſpoil?

Command the grave reſtore her taken prey?
Bid death's dark vale its human harveſt yield,
And *earth*, and *ocean*, pay their debt of man,
True to the grand depoſit truſted *there*?
Is there no *potentate*, whoſe out-ſtretch'd arm,
When ripening time calls forth th' appointed hour,
Pluck'd from foul *devaſtation's* famiſh'd maw,
Binds *preſent*, *paſt*, and *future*, to his throne?
His throne, how glorious, thus divinely grac'd,
By germinating beings cluſtering round!
A garland worthy the divinity!
A throne, by heaven's omnipotence *in ſmiles*,
Built (like a *pharos* towering in the waves)
Amidſt immenſe effuſions of his love!
An ocean of *communicated* bliſs!
An all-prolific, all preſerving God!
This were a God indeed.—And ſuch *is* man,
As here preſum'd: he riſes from his fall.
Think'ſt thou Omnipotence a naked root,
Each bloſſom fair of Deity deſtroy'd?
Nothing is dead; nay, nothing ſleeps; each ſoul,
That ever animated human clay,
Now wakes; is on the wing: and where, O where,
Will the ſwarm ſettle?—When the *trumpet's* call,
As ſounding braſs, collects us, round heaven's throne
Conglob'd, we baſk in everlaſting day,
(Paternal ſplendor!) and adhere for ever.
Had not the ſoul this *outlet* to the ſkies,
In this vaſt veſſel of the univerſe,

How

How ſhould we gaſp, as in an empty void!
How in the pangs of famiſh'd *hope* expire!
How bright *my* proſpect ſhines! how gloomy, *thine!*
A trembling world! and a devouring God!
Earth, but the Shambles of Omnipotence!
Heaven's face all ſtain'd with cauſeleſs maſſacres
Of countleſs millions, born to feel the pang
Of being *loſt*. Lorenzo! can it be?
This bids us ſhudder at the thoughts of *life*.
Who would be born to ſuch a phantom world,
Where nought ſubſtantial but our miſery?
Where joy (if joy) but heightens our diſtreſs,
So ſoon to periſh, and revive no more?
The greater *ſuch* a joy, the *more* it pains.
A world, ſo far from *great* (and yet how great
It ſhines to thee!) there 's nothing *real* in it;
Being, a ſhadow; *conſciouſneſs*, a dream:
A dream, how dreadful! Univerſal blank
Before it, and behind! Poor man, a ſpark
From non-exiſtence ſtruck by wrath divine,
Glittering a moment, nor that moment ſure,
'Midſt upper, nether, and ſurrounding *night*,
His ſad, ſure, ſudden, and eternal tomb!
Lorenzo! doſt thou *feel* theſe arguments?
Or is there nought but *vengeance* can be felt?
How haſt thou dar'd the deity dethrone?
How dar'd *indict* Him of a world like this?
If *ſuch* the world, creation was a crime;
For what is crime but cauſe of miſery?
Retract, blaſphemer! and unriddle *this*,

Of endleſs arguments *above*, *below*,
Without us, and *within*, the ſhort reſult—
" *If man 's immortal, there 's a God in heaven.*"
But wherefore ſuch redundancy? ſuch waſte
Of argument? One ſets *my* ſoul at reſt!
One obvious, and at hand, and, oh!—at *heart*.
So juſt the ſkies, Philander's life ſo pain'd,
His heart ſo pure; *that*, or *ſucceeding* ſcenes
Have palms to give, or ne'er had he been born.
" *What an old tale is this!*" Lorenzo cries.—
I grant this argument is old; but truth
No years impair; and had not this been true,
Thou never hadſt deſpis'd it for its age.
Truth is immortal as thy ſoul; and *fable*
As fleeting as thy joys: be wiſe, nor make
Heaven's higheſt bleſſing, vengeance; O be wiſe!
Nor make a curſe of *immortality*.
Say, know'ſt thou what *it* is, or what *thou* art?
Know'ſt thou th' *importance* of a ſoul immortal?
Behold this midnight glory: worlds on worlds!
Amazing pomp! redouble this amaze;
Ten thouſand add; add twice ten thouſand more;
Then weigh the whole; *one* ſoul outweighs them all;
And calls th' aſtoniſhing magnificence
Of *unintelligent* creation *poor*.
For this, believe not *me*; no *man* believe;
Truſt not in words, but deeds; and deeds no leſs
Than thoſe of the Supreme; nor His, a few;
Conſult them *all*; conſulted, all proclaim
Thy ſoul's importance: tremble at thyſelf;

For

For whom *Omnipotence* has wak'd ſo long:
Has wak'd, and work'd, for ages; from the birth
Of nature to this *unbelieving* hour.
In this ſmall province of His vaſt domain
(All *nature* bow, while I pronounce His Name!)
What has God done, and not for *this* ſole end,
To reſcue ſouls from death? The *ſoul's high price*
Is writ in all the conduct of the ſkies.
The *ſoul's high price* is the *Creation's Key*.
Unlocks its myſteries, and naked lays
The genuine cauſe of every deed divine:
That is the *chain of ages*, which maintains
Their obvious correſpondence, and unites
Moſt diſtant periods in one bleſt deſign:
That is the *mighty hinge*, on which have turn'd
All revolutions, whether we regard
The *natural*, *civil*, or *religious*, world;
The former two but ſervants to the third:
To that there duty done, they both expire,
Their *maſs* new-caſt, forgot their *deeds renown'd*;
And angels aſk, "*Where once they ſhone ſo fair?*"
To lift us from this abject, to ſublime;
This flux, to permanent; this dark, to day;
This foul, to pure; this turbid, to ſerene;
This mean, to mighty!—for *this* glorious end
Th' Almighty, riſing, his long ſabbath broke!
The world was made; was ruin'd; was reſtor'd;
Laws from the ſkies were publiſh'd; were repeal'd;
On *earth* kings, kingdoms, roſe; kings, kingdoms, fell;
Fam'd ſages lighted up the *pagan* world;

Prophets from Sion darted a keen glance
Through diſtant age; ſaints travel'd; martyrs bled;
By wonders ſacred nature ſtood control'd;
The living were tranſlated; dead were raiſ'd;
Angels, and *more* than angels, came from heaven;
And, oh! for *this*, deſcended lower ſtill;
Guilt was hell's gloom; aſtoniſh'd at his gueſt,
For one ſhort moment Lucifer ador'd:
Lorenzo! and wilt thou do leſs?—For *this*,
That *hallow'd page*, fools ſcoff at, was inſpir'd,
Of all theſe truths thrice venerable code!
Deiſts! perform your quarantine; and then
Fall proſtrate, ere you touch it, leſt you die.
Nor leſs intenſely bent *infernal* powers
To mar, than thoſe of *light*, *this* end to gain.
O what a ſcene is here!—Lorenzo! wake!
Riſe to the thought; exert, expand thy ſoul
To take the vaſt idea: it denies
All *elſe* the name of great. Two warring worlds!
Not Europe againſt Afric; warring worlds!
Of *more* than mortal! mounted on the wing!
On ardent wings of energy and zeal,
High-hovering o'er this little brand of ſtrife!
This ſublunary ball—But ſtrife, for what?
In their own cauſe conflicting? No; in *thine*,
In *man's*. His *ſingle* intereſt blows the flame;
His the ſole ſtake; his fate the trumpet ſounds,
Which kindles war immortal. How it burns!
Tumultuous ſwarms of deities in arms!
Force, force oppoſing, till the waves run high,

And

And tempeſt nature's univerſal ſphere.
Such oppoſites eternal, ſtedfaſt, ſtern,
Such foes implacable, are *good*, and *ill*;
Yet man, vain man, would mediate peace between them.
Think not this fiction, "*There was war in heaven.*"
From heaven's high cryſtal mountain, where it hung,
Th' Almighty's out-ſtretch'd arm took down his bow,
And ſhot his indignation at the *deep*:
Re-thunder'd *hell*, and darted all her fires.
And ſeems the ſtake of little moment ſtill?
And ſlumbers *man*, who ſingly caus'd the ſtorm?
He ſleeps.—And art thou ſhock'd at *myſteries?*
The greateſt, Thou. How dreadful to reflect,
What ardour, care, and counſel *mortals* cauſe
In breaſts divine! how little in their own!
Where-e'er I turn, how new *proofs* pour upon me!
How happily this wondrous view ſupports
My former argument! How ſtrongly *ſtrikes*
Immortal life's full demonſtration, *here!*
Why this exertion? Why this ſtrange regard
From heaven's Omnipotent indulg'd to man?—
Becauſe, in man, the glorious dreadful power,
Extremely to be pain'd, or bleſt, for *ever*.
Duration gives importance; ſwells the price.
An angel, if a creature of a day,
What would he be? A trifle of no weight;
Or ſtand, or fall; no matter which; he 's gone.
Becauſe Immortal, therefore is indulg'd
This ſtrange regard of deities to duſt.
Hence heaven looks down on earth with all her eyes:

Hence, the ſoul's mighty moment in her ſight:
Hence, every ſoul has partiſans above,
And every thought a critic in the ſkies:
Hence, clay, vile clay! has angels for its guard,
And every guard a paſſion for his charge:
Hence, from all age, the cabinet divine
Has held high counſel o'er the fate of man.
Nor have the clouds thoſe gracious counſels hid;
Angels undrew the curtain of the throne,
And Providence came forth to meet mankind:
In various modes of emphaſis and awe,
He ſpoke his will, and trembling *nature* heard;
He ſpoke it loud, in thunder and in ſtorm.
Witneſs, thou Sinai! whoſe cloud-cover'd height,
And ſhaken baſis, own'd the preſent God;
Witneſs, ye *billows!* whoſe returning tide,
Breaking the chain that faſten'd it in air,
Swept Egypt, and her menaces, to hell:
Witneſs, ye *flames!* th' Aſſyrian tyrant blew
To ſevenfold rage, as impotent, as ſtrong:
And thou, *earth!* witneſs, whoſe expanding jaws
Clos'd o'er * *preſumption's* ſacrilegious ſons:
Has not each element, in turn, ſubſcrib'd
The *ſoul's high price*, and ſworn it to the wiſe?
Has not flame, ocean, æther, earthquake, ſtrove
To ſtrike *this truth* through adamantine man?
If not all adamant, Lorenzo! hear;
All is deluſion; *nature* is wrapt up,
In tenfold night, from *reaſon's* keeneſt eye;

There

* Korah, &c.

There 's no conſiſtence, meaning, plan, or end,
In all beneath the ſun, in all above,
(As far as man can penetrate), or heaven
Is an immenſe, ineſtimable prize;
Or all is Nothing, or that prize is all.—
And ſhall each *toy* be ſtill a match for heaven,
And full equivalent for groans below?
Who would not give a trifle to *prevent*
What he would give a thouſand worlds to *cure?*
Lorenzo! thou haſt ſeen (if thine to ſee)
All *nature*, and her God (by nature's *courſe*,
And nature's courſe *control'd*) declare for me:
The ſkies above proclaim, "*immortal* man!"
And, "man *immortal!*" all below reſounds.
The world 's a ſyſtem of theology,
Read by the greateſt ſtrangers to the ſchools;
If *boneſt*, learn'd; and *ſages* o'er a plough.
Is not, Lorenzo! then, impos'd on thee
This hard alternative; or, to renounce
Thy *reaſon*, or thy *ſenſe*; or, to *believe?*
What then is *unbelief?* 'Tis an exploit;
A ſtrenuous enterprize: to gain it, man
Muſt burſt through every bar of common ſenſe,
Of common ſhame, magnanimouſly wrong;
And what rewards the ſturdy combatant?
His prize, *repentance*; *infamy*, his crown.
But wherefore, *infamy?*—For want of *faith*,
Down the ſteep precipice of *wrong* he ſlides;
There 's nothing to ſupport him in the *right*.
Faith in the future wanting is at leaſt

In

In *embryo*, every weakneſs, every guilt;
And ſtrong temptation ripens it to *birth*.
If *this* life's gain invites him to the deed,
Why not his country ſold, his father ſlain?
'Tis virtue to purſue our good ſupreme;
And his ſupreme, his *only* good is *here*.
Ambition, *avarice*, by the wiſe diſdain'd,
Is perfect *wiſdom*, while mankind are *fools*,
And think a turf, or tomb-ſtone, covers all:
Theſe find employment, and provide for *ſenſe*
A richer paſture, and a larger range;
And *ſenſe* by right divine aſcends the throne,
When *virtue's* prize and proſpect are no more;
Virtue no more we think the will of heaven.
Would heaven quite *beggar* virtue, if belov'd?
"Has *virtue* charms?"—I grant her heavenly;
But if unportion'd, all will *intereſt* wed;
Though *that* our admiration, *this* our choice.
The virtues grow on *immortality*;
That root deſtroy'd, they wither and expire.
A Deity believ'd, will nought avail;
Rewards and *puniſhments* make God ador'd;
And *hopes* and *fears* give *conſcience* all her power.
As in the dying parent dies the child,
Virtue, with *immortality*, expires.
Who tells me he denies his ſoul immortal,
Whate'er his boaſt, has told me, *He 's a knave*.
His *duty* 'tis, to love himſelf *alone*;
Nor care though mankind periſh, if he ſmiles.
Who thinks ere long the man ſhall *wholly* die,

Is dead already; nought but *brute* ſurvives.
And are there ſuch?—Such candidates there are
For *more* than death; for utter loſs of being,
Being, the baſis of the Deity!
Aſk you the *cauſe?*—The cauſe they will not tell:
Nor *need* they: Oh the ſorceries of *ſenſe!*
They work this transformation on the ſoul,
Diſmount her, like the ſerpent at the fall,
Diſmount her from her native wing (which ſoar'd
Ere-while ethereal heights), and throw her down,
To lick the duſt, and *crawl* in ſuch a thought.
Is it in words to paint you? O ye fall'n!
Fall'n from the wings of *reaſon*, and of *hope!*
Erect in ſtature, prone in appetite!
Patrons of pleaſure, poſting into pain!
Lovers of argument, averſe to ſenſe!
Boaſters of liberty, faſt bound in chains!
Lords of the wide creation, and the ſhame!
More *ſenſeleſs* than th' *irrationals* you ſcorn!
More *baſe* than thoſe you rule! Than thoſe you pity,
Far more *undone!* O ye moſt infamous
Of beings, from ſuperior dignity!
Deepeſt in woe from means of boundleſs bliſs!
Ye curſt by bleſſings infinite! becauſe
Moſt highly favour'd, moſt profoundly loſt!
Ye motly maſs of *contradiction* ſtrong!
And are you, too, convinc'd, your ſouls fly off
In exhalation ſoft, and die in air,
From the full flood of evidence *againſt* you?
In the coarſe drudgeries and ſinks of *ſenſe*,

Your

Your ſouls have quite worn out the make of heav
By vice new-caſt, and creatures of your own:
But though you can *deform*, you can't *deſtroy*;
To *curſe*, not *uncreate*, is all your power.
Lorenzo! this black brotherhood renounce;
Renounce St. Evremont, and read St. Paul.
Ere, rapt by miracle, by *reaſon* wing'd,
His mounting mind made long abode in heaven.
This is *freethinking*, unconfin'd to *parts*,
To ſend the ſoul, on curious travel bent,
Through all the provinces of human thought;
To dart her flight through the whole ſphere of man;
Of this vaſt univerſe to make the tour;
In each receſs of *ſpace*, and *time*, at home;
Familiar with their wonders; diving deep;
And, like a prince of boundleſs intereſts *there*,
Still moſt ambitious of the moſt remote;
To look on *truth* unbroken, and intire;
Truth in the *ſyſtem*, the full orb; where truths
By truths enlighten'd, and ſuſtain'd, afford
An arch-like, ſtrong foundation, to ſupport
Th' incumbent weight of abſolute, complete
Conviction; here, the more we preſs, we ſtand
More firm; who moſt *examine*, moſt *believe*.
Parts, like half-ſentences, confound; the *whole*
Conveys the ſenſe, and God is underſtood;
Who not in *fragments* writes to human race:
Read his *whole* volume, ſceptic! then reply.
This, *this*, is *thinking free*, a thought that graſps
Beyond a grain, and looks beyond an hour.

Turn up thine eye, ſurvey this midnight ſcene;
What are earth's kingdoms, to yon boundleſs orbs,
Of human ſouls, one day, the deſtin'd range?
And what yon boundleſs orbs, to godlike *man?*
Thoſe numerous worlds that throng the firmament,
And aſk more ſpace in heaven, can roll at large
In man's capacious thought, and ſtill leave room
For ampler orbs, for *new* creations, there.
Can *ſuch* a ſoul contract itſelf, to gripe
A point of no dimenſion, of no weight?
It can; it does: the *world* is ſuch a point:
And, of *that* point, how *ſmall* a part enſlaves!
How ſmall a part—of *nothing*, ſhall I ſay?
Why not?—*Friends*, our *chief* treaſure! how they drop!
Lucia, Narciſſa fair, Philander, gone!
The *grave*, like fabled Cerberus, has op'd
A triple mouth; and, in an aweful voice,
Loud calls my ſoul, and utters all I ſing.
How the world falls to pieces round about us,
And leaves us in a ruin of our joy!
What ſays this *tranſportation* of my friends?
It bids me love the place where *now* they dwell,
And ſcorn this wretched ſpot, they leave ſo poor.
Eternity's vaſt *ocean* lies before thee;
There; there, Lorenzo! thy Clariſſa ſails.
Give thy mind ſea-room; keep it wide of *earth*,
That rock of ſouls *immortal*; cut thy cord;
Weigh anchor; ſpread thy ſails; call every wind;
Eye thy *Great Pole-ſtar*; make the land of life.
Two kinds of life has *double-natur'd* man,

And

And two of death; the *laſt* far more ſevere.
Life *animal* is nurtur'd by the ſun;
Thrives on his bounties, triumphs in his beams.
Life *rational* ſubſiſts on higher food,
Triumphant in *His* beams, who made the day.
When we leave *that* ſun, and are left by *this*,
(The fate of all who die in ſtubborn guilt)
'Tis *utter* darkneſs; ſtrictly *double* death.
We ſink by no *judicial* ſtroke of heaven,
But nature's *courſe*; as ſure as plumbets fall.
Since God, or man, muſt alter, ere they meet,
(Since light and darkneſs blend not in one ſphere)
'Tis manifeſt, Lorenzo! *who* muſt change.
If, then, that *double death* ſhould prove thy lot,
Blame not the bowels of the Deity;
Man ſhall be bleſt, as far as man *permits*.
Not man alone, all *rationals*, heaven arms
With an illuſtrious, but tremendous, power
To counter-act its own moſt gracious ends;
And this, of ſtrict neceſſity, not choice;
That power deny'd, *men*, *angels*, were no more
But paſſive engines, void of praiſe or blame.
A nature *rational* implies the power
Of being bleſt, or wretched, as we pleaſe;
Elſe idle *reaſon* would have nought to do;
And he that would be barr'd capacity
Of pain, courts incapacity of bliſs.
Heaven *wills* our happineſs, *allows* our doom;
Invites us ardently, but not *compels*;
Heaven but *perſuades*, almighty man *decrees*;

Mir

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Of nature to this *unbelieving* hour.
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(All *nature* bow, while I pronounce His Name!)
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Th' Almighty, riſing, his long ſabbath broke!
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Laws from the ſkies were publiſh'd; were repeal'd;
On *earth* kings, kingdoms, roſe; kings, kingdoms, fell;
Fam'd ſages lighted up the *pagan* world;

Like him they ſerve, they *tremble*, and *believe*.
Is there hypocriſy ſo foul as this,
So fatal to the welfare of the world?
What *deteſtation*, what *contempt*, their due!
And, if unpaid, be thank'd for their eſcape
That Chriſtian candour they *ſtrive* hard to ſcorn:
If not for that aſylum, they might find
A hell on *earth*; nor 'ſcape a worſe *below*.
With inſolence, and impotence of thought,
Inſtead of racking fancy, to *refute*,
Reform thy manners, and the truth *enjoy*.—
But ſhall I dare confeſs the dire reſult?
Can thy proud *reaſon* brook ſo black a brand?
From *purer manners*, to *ſublimer faith*,
Is nature's unavoidable aſcent;
An *honeſt* deiſt, where the goſpel ſhines,
Matur'd to nobler, in the *Chriſtian* ends.
When that bleſt change arrives, e'en caſt aſide
This ſong ſuperfluous; *life immortal* ſtrikes
Conviction, in a flood of light *divine*.
A *Chriſtian* dwells, like * Uriel, in the ſun;
Meridian evidence puts *doubt* to flight;
And ardent *hope* anticipates the ſkies.
Of *that* bright ſun, Lorenzo! ſcale the ſphere;
'Tis eaſy! it invites thee; it deſcends
From heaven to wooe, and waft thee whence it came
Read and revere the *ſacred page*; a page
Where triumphs *immortality*; a page
Which not the whole *creation* could produce;

Wl

* Milton.

This ſacred ſhade, and ſolitude, what is it?
'Tis the felt preſence of the Deity.
Few are the faults we flatter when alone.
Vice ſinks in her allurements, is ungilt,
And looks, like other objects, black by night.
By night an Atheiſt half-believes a God.
Night is fair virtue's immemorial friend;
The conſcious moon, through every diſtant age,
Has held a lamp to *wiſdom*, and let fall,
On *contemplation's* eye, her purging ray.
The fam'd Athenian, he who woo'd from heaven
Philoſophy the fair, to dwell with men,
And form their manners, not inflame their pride,
While o'er his head, as fearful to moleſt
His labouring mind, the ſtars in ſilence ſlide,
And ſeem all gazing on their future gueſt,
See him ſoliciting his ardent ſuit
In *private* audience: all the live-long night,
Rigid in thought, and motionleſs, he ſtands;
Nor quits his theme, or poſture, till the ſun
(Rude drunkard riſing roſy from the main!)
Diſturbs his nobler intellectual beam,
And gives him to the tumult of the world.
Hail, precious moments! ſtol'n from the black waſte
Of murder'd time! Auſpicious *midnight!* hail!
The world excluded, every paſſion huſh,
And open'd a calm intercourſe with heaven,
Here the ſoul ſits in council; ponders *paſt*,
Predeſtines *future* action; ſees, not feels,
Tumultuous life, and reaſons with the ſtorm;

All her lyes anſwers, and *thinks* down her charms.
What aweful joy! What mental liberty!
I am not pent in darkneſs; rather ſay
(If not too bold) in darkneſs I'm embower'd.
Delightful gloom! the cluſtering thoughts around
Spontaneous riſe, and bloſſom in the ſhade;
But droop by day, and ſicken in the *ſun*.
Thought borrows light elſewhere; from that *firſt* fire,
Fountain of animation! whence deſcends
Urania, my celeſtial gueſt! who deigns
Nightly to viſit me, ſo mean; and *now*,
Conſcious how needful diſcipline to man,
From pleaſing dalliance with the charms of *night*
My wandering thought recalls, to what excites
Far other beat of heart! Narciſſa's tomb!
Or is it feeble nature calls me back,
And breaks my ſpirit into grief again?
Is it a Stygian vapour in my blood?
A cold, ſlow puddle, creeping through my veins?
Or is it thus with all men?—Thus with all.
What are we? How unequal! Now we ſoar,
And now we ſink; to be the *ſame*, tranſcends
Our preſent proweſs. Dearly pays the *ſoul*
For lodging ill; too dearly rents her clay.
Reaſon, a baffled counſellor! but adds
The bluſh of weakneſs to the bane of woe.
The nobleſt ſpirit, fighting her hard fate,
In this damp, duſky region, charg'd with ſtorms,
But feebly flutters, yet untaught to fly;
Or, flying, ſhort her flight, and ſure her fall.

Our utmoſt ſtrength, when down, to riſe again;
And not to *yield*, though *beaten*, all our praiſe.
'Tis vain to ſeek in men for more than man.
Though proud in promiſe, big in previous thought,
Experience damps our triumph. I, who late,
Emerging from the ſhadows of the grave,
Where *grief* detain'd me priſoner, mounting high,
Threw wide the gates of everlaſting day,
And call'd mankind to glory, ſhook off *pain*,
Mortality ſhook off, in æther pure,
And ſtruck the ſtars; *now* feel my ſpirits fail;
They drop me from the zenith; down I ruſh,
Like him whom fable fledg'd with waxen wings,
In ſorrow drown'd—but not in ſorrow loſt.
How wretched is the man who never mourn'd!
I dive for precious pearl in *ſorrow's* ſtream:
Not ſo the thoughtleſs man that *only* grieves:
Takes all the torment, and rejects the gain
(Ineſtimable gain!) and gives heaven leave
To make him but more wretched, not more wiſe.
If wiſdom is our leſſon (and what elſe
Ennobles man? what elſe have angels learnt?)
Grief! more proficients in thy ſchool are made,
Than *genius*, or *proud learning*, e'er could boaſt.
Voracious *learning*, often over-fed,
Digeſts not into ſenſe her motley meal.
This *book-caſe*, with dark booty almoſt burſt,
This *forager* on others' wiſdom, leaves
Her native farm, her *reaſon*, quite untill'd.
With mixt manure ſhe ſurfeits the rank ſoil,

Dung'd, but not dreſt; and rich to beggary.
A pomp untameable of weeds prevails.
Her *ſervant's* wealth, incumber'd *wiſdom* mourns.
And what ſays *genius?* "*Let the dull be wiſe.*"
Genius, too hard for right, can prove it wrong;
And loves to boaſt, where bluſh men leſs inſpir'd.
It pleads exemption from the laws of *ſenſe*;
Conſiders *reaſon* as a leveler;
And ſcorns to ſhare a bleſſing with the croud.
That wiſe it *could* be, thinks an ample claim
To *glory*, and to *pleaſure* gives the reſt.
Craſſus but ſleeps, Ardelio is undone.
Wiſdom leſs ſhudders at a fool, than wit.
But *wiſdom* ſmiles, when humbled mortals weep.
When *ſorrow* wounds the breaſt, as ploughs the glebe,
And hearts obdurate feel her ſoftening ſhower;
Her ſeed celeſtial, then, glad *wiſdom* ſows;
Her golden harveſt triumphs in the ſoil.
If ſo, Narciſſa! welcome my *Relapſe*;
I 'll raiſe a tax on my calamity,
And reap rich compenſation from my pain.
I 'll range the plenteous intellectual field;
And gather every thought of ſovereign power
To chaſe the moral maladies of man;
Thoughts, which may bear tranſplanting to the ſkies,
Though natives of this coarſe penurious ſoil;
Nor wholly wither *there*, where *ſeraphs* ſing,
Refin'd, exalted, not annull'd, in heaven.
Reaſon, the ſun that gives them birth, the ſame
In either clime, though more illuſtrious *there*.

ieſe choicely cull'd, and elegantly rang'd,
all form a garland for Narciſſa's tomb;
id, peradventure, of no fading flowers.
Say on what themes ſhall puzzled choice deſcend?
Th' importance of contemplating the tomb;
Why men decline it; *ſuicide's* foul birth;
The various *kind of grief*; the *faults of age*;
And *death's dread character*—invite my ſong."
And, firſt th' importance of our end ſurvey'd.
iends counſel quick diſmiſſion of our grief:
iſtaken kindneſs! our hearts heal *too ſoon*.
e *they* more kind than *he*, who ſtruck the blow?
ho bid it do his errand in our hearts,
id baniſh peace, till *nobler gueſts* arrive,
id bring it back, a true and endleſs peace?
lamities are *friends*: As glaring *day*
theſe unnumber'd luſtres robs our ſight;
oſperity puts out unnumber'd thoughts
import high, and light divine, to man.
The man how bleſt, who, ſick of gaudy ſcenes,
cenes apt to thruſt between Us and Ourſelves!)
led by choice to take his favourite walk,
neath *death's* gloomy, ſilent, cypreſs ſhades,
ıpierc'd by vanity's fantaſtic ray;
ſ read his monuments, to weigh his duſt,
ſit his vaults, and dwell among the tombs!
ırenzo! read with me Narciſſa's ſtone;
[arciſſa was thy favourite) let us read
:r *moral* ſtone; few doctors preach ſo well;
w orators ſo tenderly can touch

The feeling heart. What *pathos* in the *date!*
Apt words can ſtrike: and yet in them we ſee
Faint images of what we, *here*, enjoy.
What cauſe have *we* to build on length of life?
Temptations ſeize, when *fear* is laid aſleep;
And ill foreboded is our ſtrongeſt guard.

See from her tomb, as from an humbler ſhrine,
Truth, radiant goddeſs! ſallies on my ſoul,
And puts *deluſion's* duſky train to flight;
Diſpels the miſts our ſultry *paſſions* raiſe,
From objects low, terreſtrial, and obſcene;
And ſhews the *real* eſtimate of things;
Which no man, unafflicted, ever ſaw;
Pulls off the veil from *virtue's* riſing charms;
Detects *temptation* in a thouſand lyes.
Truth bids me look on men, as *autumn* leaves,
And all they bleed for, as the ſummer's duſt,
Driven by the whirlwind: lighted by her beams,
I widen my horizon, gain new powers,
See things inviſible, feel things remote,
Am preſent with futurities; think nought
To man ſo foreign, as the joys *poſſeſt*;
Nought ſo much his, as thoſe beyond the grave.

No *folly* keeps its colour in *her* ſight;
Pale *worldly wiſdom* loſes all her charms;
In pompous promiſe, from her ſchemes profound,
If future fate ſhe plans, 'tis all in leaves,
Like Sibyl, unſubſtantial, fleeting bliſs!
At the firſt blaſt it vaniſhes in air.
Not ſo, celeſtial: wouldſt thou know, Lorenzo!

How differ *worldly wiſdom*, and *divine?*
Juſt as the waning, and the waxing moon.
More empty *worldly* wiſdom every day;
And every day more fair her *rival* ſhines.
When *later*, there 's leſs time to play the fool.
Soon our whole term for wiſdom is expir'd
(Thou know'ſt ſhe calls no council in the grave):
And everlaſting fool is writ in fire,
Or *real* wiſdom wafts us to the ſkies.
As worldly ſchemes reſemble Sibyls' leaves,
The good man's days to Sibyls' books compare,
(In antient ſtory read, thou know'ſt the tale)
In price ſtill riſing, as in number leſs,
Ineſtimable quite his final hour.
For That who thrones can offer, offer thrones;
Inſolvent worlds the purchaſe cannot pay.
"Oh let me die his death!" all nature cries.
"Then live his life."—All nature faulters there.
Our great phyſician daily to conſult,
To commune with the *grave*, our only cure.
What grave preſcribes the beſt?—A friend's; and yet,
From a friend's grave how ſoon we diſengage!
Ev'n to the deareſt, as his marble, cold.
Why are friends raviſht from us? 'Tis to bind,
By ſoft *affection's* tyes, on human hearts,
The thought of death, which *reaſon*, too ſupine,
Or miſemploy'd, ſo rarely faſtens *there*.
Nor reaſon, nor affection, no, nor both
Combin'd, can break the witchcrafts of the world.
Behold, th' inexorable hour at hand!

Behold, th' inexorable hour forgot!
And to forget it, the chief *aim* of life,
Though well to ponder it, is life's chief *end*.
Is death, that ever threatening, ne'er remote,
That all-important, and that only ſure,
(Come when he will) an unexpected gueſt?
Nay, though invited by the loudeſt calls
Of blind *imprudence*, unexpected ſtill?
Though numerous meſſengers are ſent before,
To warn his great arrival. What the cauſe,
The wondrous cauſe, of this myſterious ill?
All heaven looks down aſtoniſh'd at the ſight.
Is it, that life has ſown her *joys* ſo thick,
We can't thruſt in a ſingle care between?
Is it, that life has ſuch a ſwarm of *cares*,
The thought of death can't enter for the throng?
Is it, that *time* ſteals on with downy feet,
Nor wakes *indulgence* from her golden dream?
To-day is ſo like *yeſterday*, it cheats;
We take the lying ſiſter for the ſame.
Life glides away, Lorenzo! like a brook;
For ever changing, unperceiv'd the change.
In the ſame brook none ever bath'd him twice:
To the ſame life none ever twice awoke.
We call the brook the ſame; the ſame we think
Our life, though ſtill more rapid in its flow;
Nor mark the *much*, irrevocably laps'd,
And mingled with the ſea. Or ſhall we ſay
(Retaining ſtill the brook to bear us on)
That life is like a veſſel on the ſtream?

In life embark'd, we ſmoothly down the tide
Of *time* deſcend, but not on *time* intent;
Amus'd, unconſcious of the gliding wave;
Till on a ſudden we perceive a ſhock;
We ſtart, awake, look out; what ſee we there?
Our brittle bark is burſt on Charon's ſhore.

Is this the cauſe *death* flies all human thought?
Or is it *judgment*, by the *will* ſtruck blind,
That domineering miſtreſs of the ſoul!
Like *him* ſo ſtrong, by Dalilah the fair?
Or is it *fear* turns ſtartled *reaſon* back,
From looking down a precipice ſo ſteep?
'Tis dreadful; and the dread is wiſely plac'd,
By nature, conſcious of the make of man.
A dreadful friend it is, a terror kind,
A flaming ſword to guard the tree of life.
By that unaw'd, in life's moſt ſmiling hour,
The *good man* would repine; would *ſuffer* joys,
And burn impatient for his promis'd ſkies.
The *bad*, on each punctilious pique of pride,
Or gloom of humour, would give rage the rein;
Bound o'er the barrier, ruſh into the dark,
And mar the ſchemes of Providence below.

What groan was that, Lorenzo?—Furies! riſe;
And drown in your leſs execrable yell
Britannia's ſhame. There took her gloomy flight,
On wing impetuous, a black ſullen ſoul,
Blaſted from hell, with horrid luſt of death.
Thy friend, the brave, the gallant Altamont,
So call'd, ſo thought—And *then* he fled the field.

Laſt

Leſs baſe the fear of death, than fear of life.
O Britain, infamous for ſuicide!
An *iſland* in thy manners, far disjoin'd
From the whole world of *rationals* beſide!
In ambient waves plunge thy polluted head,
Waſh the dire ſtain, nor ſhock the continent.
But thou be ſhock'd, while I detect the cauſe
Of *ſelf-aſſault*, expoſe the monſter's birth,
And bid *abhorrence* hiſs it round the world.
Blame not thy clime, nor chide the diſtant ſun;
The ſun is innocent, thy clime abſolv'd:
Immoral climes kind nature never made.
The cauſe I ſing, in Eden might prevail,
And proves, It is thy folly, not thy fate.
The ſoul of man (let man in homage bow,
Who names his *ſoul*), a native of the ſkies!
High-born, and free, her freedom ſhould maintain,
Unfold, unmortgag'd for *earth's* little bribes.
Th' illuſtrious ſtranger, in this foreign land,
Like ſtrangers, jealous of her dignity,
Studious of home, and ardent to return,
Of *earth* ſuſpicious, *earth's* inchanted cup
With cool reſerve light touching, ſhould indulge,
On *immortality*, her godlike taſte,
There take large draughts; make her chief banquet *there*.
But ſome reject this ſuſtenance divine;
To beggarly vile appetites deſcend;
Aſk alms of *earth* for gueſts that came from *heaven*:
Sink into ſlaves; and ſell, for *preſent* hire,

Their

Their rich reverſion, and (what ſhares its fate)
Their native *freedom*, to the prince who ſways
This nether world. And when his payments fail,
When his foul baſket gorges them no more,
Or their pall'd palates loath the baſket full;
Are inſtantly, with wild demoniac rage,
For breaking all the chains of Providence,
And burſting their confinement; though faſt barr'd
By laws divine and human; guarded ſtrong
With *horrors* doubled to defend the paſs,
The blackeſt, *nature*, or *dire guilt* can raiſe;
And moated round with fathomleſs *deſtruction*,
Sure to receive, and whelm them in their fall.

Such, Britons! is the *cauſe*, to you unknown,
Or worſe, o'erlook'd; o'erlook'd by magiſtrates,
Thus criminals themſelves. I grant the deed
Is madneſs; but the madneſs of the *heart*.
And what is that? Our utmoſt bound of guilt.
A ſenſual, unreflecting life, is big
With monſtrous births, and *Suicide*, to crown
The black infernal brood. The bold to break
Heaven's law ſupreme, and deſperately ruſh
Through ſacred *nature's* murder, on their own,
Becauſe they never *think of death*, they die.
'Tis equally man's duty, glory, gain,
At once to ſhun, and meditate, his end.
When by the bed of languiſhment we ſit,
(The ſeat of *wiſdom!* if our choice, not fate)
Or, o'er our dying friends, in anguiſh hang,
Wipe the cold dew, or ſtay the ſinking head,

Number their moments, and, in every clock,
Start at the voice of an Eternity;
See the dim lamp of life juſt feebly lift
An agonizing beam, at us to gaze,
Then ſink again, and quiver into death,
That moſt pathetic herald of our own;
How read we ſuch ſad ſcenes? As ſent to man
In perfect vengeance? No; in pity ſent,
To melt him down, like wax, and then impreſs,
Indelible, *death's* image on his heart;
Bleeding for others, trembling for himſelf.
We bleed, we tremble, we forget, we ſmile.
The mind turns fool, before the cheek is dry.
Our quick-returning *folly* cancels all;
As the tide ruſhing raſes what is writ
In yielding ſands, and ſmooths the letter'd ſhore.
Lorenzo! haſt thou ever weigh'd a *ſigh*?
Or ſtudy'd the philoſophy of *tears*?
(A ſcience, yet unlectur'd in our ſchools!
Haſt thou deſcended deep into the breaſt,
And ſeen their ſource? If not, deſcend with me,
And trace theſe briny rivulets to their ſprings.
Our funeral tears from different cauſes riſe,
As if from ſeparate ciſterns in the ſoul,
Of *various kinds*, they flow. From tender hearts,
By ſoft contagion call'd, *ſome* burſt at once,
And ſtream obſequious to the leading eye.
Some aſk more time, by curious *art* diſtill'd.
Some hearts, in ſecret hard, unapt to melt,
Struck by the magic of the public eye,

Like Moſes' ſmitten rock, guſh out amain.
Some weep to ſhare the fate of the deceas'd,
So high in merit, and to them ſo dear.
They dwell on praiſes, which they think they ſhare;
And thus, without a bluſh, commend themſelves.
Some mourn, in proof, that ſomething they could love:
They weep not to *relieve* their grief, but *ſhew*.
Some weep in perfect juſtice to the dead,
As conſcious all their love is in arrear.
Some miſchievouſly weep, not unappriz'd,
Tears, ſometimes, aid the conqueſt of an eye.
With what addreſs the ſoft Epheſians draw
Their ſable net-work o'er entangled hearts!
As ſeen through cryſtal, how their roſes glow,
While *liquid pearl* runs trickling down their cheek?
Of her's not prouder Egypt's wanton queen,
Carouſing gems, herſelf diſſolv'd in love.
Some weep at *death*, abſtracted from the *dead*,
And celebrate, like Charles, their own deceaſe.
By kind conſtruction ſome are *deem'd* to weep,
Becauſe a decent veil conceals their joy.
Some weep in earneſt, and yet weep in vain;
As deep in indiſcretion, as in woe.
Paſſion, blind paſſion! impotently pours
Tears, that deſerve more tears; while *reaſon* ſleeps;
Or gazes like an idiot, unconcern'd;
Nor comprehends the meaning of the ſtorm;
Knows not it ſpeaks to *her*, and her *alone*.
Irrationals all ſorrow are beneath,

That

That noble gift! that privilege of man!
From *ſorrow's* pang, the birth of endleſs joy.
But *theſe* are barren of that birth divine:
They weep impetuous, as the ſummer ſtorm,
And full as ſhort! The cruel *grief* ſoon tam'd,
They make a paſtime of the ſtingleſs tale;
Far as the deep reſounding knell, they ſpread
The dreadful news, and hardly feel it more.
No grain of *wiſdom* pays them for their *woe*.
Half-round the globe, the tears pump'd up by *d*
Are ſpent in watering vanities of life;
In making *jolly* flouriſh ſtill more fair.
When the ſick ſoul, her wonted ſtay withdrawn,
Reclines on earth, and ſorrows in the duſt;
Inſtead of learning, *there*, her *true ſupport*,
Though there thrown down her true ſupport to lea
Without heaven's aid, impatient to be bleſt,
She crawls to the next ſhrub, or bramble vile,
Though from the ſtately cedar's arms ſhe fell;
With ſtale, forſworn embraces, clings anew,
The ſtranger weds, and bloſſoms, as before,
In all the fruitleſs fopperies of life:
Preſents her *weed*, well fancy'd, at the ball,
And raffles for the *death's head* on the ring.
So wept Aurelia, till the deſtin'd youth
Stept in, with his receipt for making ſmiles,
And blanching ſables into bridal bloom.
So wept Lorenzo fair Clariſſa's fate;
Who gave that angel boy, on whom he doats;
And dy'd to give him, orphan'd in his birth!

Not ſuch, Narciſſa, my diſtreſs for Thee.
I 'll make an altar of thy ſacred tomb,
To ſacrifice to wiſdom. What waſt Thou?
"*Young*, *gay*, and *fortunate!*" Each yields a theme.
I'll dwell on each, to ſhun thought more ſevere;
(Heaven knows I labour with ſeverer ſtill!)
I 'll dwell on each, and quite exhauſt thy death.
A ſoul without reflection, like a pile
Without inhabitant, to ruin runs.
And, firſt, thy *youth*. What ſays it to grey hairs!
Narciſſa, I 'm become *thy* pupil *now*—
Early, bright, tranſient, chaſte, as morning dew,
She ſparkled, was exhal'd, and went to heaven.
Time on this head has ſnow'd; yet ſtill 'tis borne
Aloft; nor thinks but on *another's* grave.
Cover'd with ſhame I ſpeak it, *age* ſevere
Old worn-out vice ſets down for virtue fair;
With graceleſs gravity, chaſtiſing youth,
That youth chaſtis'd ſurpaſſing in a fault,
Father of all, forgetfulneſs of death:
As if, like objects preſſing on the ſight,
Death had advanc'd too near us to be ſeen:
Or, that life's loan *time* ripen'd into right;
And men might plead preſcription from the grave;
Deathleſs, from repetition of reprieve.
Deathleſs? far from it! *ſuch* are dead already;
Their hearts are bury'd, and the world their grave.
Tell me, ſome god! my guardian angel! tell,
What thus infatuates? what inchantment plants
The phantom of an age 'twixt us and death

Already

Already at the door? He knocks, we hear,
And yet we will not hear. What mail defends
Our untouch'd hearts? What miracle turns off
The pointed thought, which from a thouſand quivers
Is daily darted, and is daily ſhunn'd?
We ſtand, as in a battle, throngs on throngs
Around us falling; wounded oft ourſelves;
Though bleeding with our wounds, immortal ſtill!
We ſee time's furrows on another's brow,
And death intrench'd, preparing his aſſault;
How few themſelves in that juſt mirror ſee!
Or, ſeeing, draw their inference as ſtrong!
There death is certain; doubtful *here*: he *muſt*,
And *ſoon*; we *may*, within an *age*, expire.
Though grey our heads, our thoughts and aims are green;
Like damag'd clocks, whoſe hand and bell diſſent;
Folly ſings Six, while *Nature* points at Twelve.
Abſurd *longevity*! More, more, it cries:
More life, more wealth, more traſh of every kind.
And wherefore mad for more, when reliſh fails?
Object, and *appetite*, muſt club for joy;
Shall *folly* labour hard to mend the bow,
Baubles, I mean, that ſtrike us from *without*,
While *nature* is relaxing every ſtring?
Aſk *thought* for joy; grow rich, and hoard *within*.
Think you the ſoul, when this life's rattles ceaſe,
Has nothing of more manly to ſucceed?
Contract the taſte immortal; learn ev'n now
To reliſh what *alone* ſubſiſts hereafter.
Divine, or *none*, henceforth your joys for ever.

Of

Of *age* the glory is, to *wiſh* to die.
That wiſh is *praiſe*, and *promiſe*; it applauds
Paſt life, and promiſes our future bliſs.
What weakneſs ſee not children in their ſires?
Grand-climacterical abſurdities!
Grey-hair'd authority, to faults of youth,
How ſhocking: It makes folly thrice a fool;
And our firſt childhood might our laſt deſpiſe.
Peace and *eſteem* is all that age can hope.
Nothing but *wiſdom* gives the *firſt*; the *laſt*,
Nothing, but the *repute of being wiſe*.
Folly bars both; our age is quite undone.
What folly can be ranker? Like our ſhadows,
Our wiſhes lengthen, as our ſun declines.
No wiſh ſhould loiter, *then*, this ſide the grave.
Our hearts ſhould leave the world, before the knell
Calls for our carcaſes to mend the ſoil.
Enough to live in tempeſt, die in port;
Age ſhould fly concourſe, cover in retreat
Defects of *judgment*; and the *will's* ſubdue;
Walk thoughtful on the ſilent, ſolemn ſhore
Of that vaſt ocean it muſt ſail ſo ſoon;
And put *good-works* on board; and wait the wind
That ſhortly blows us into worlds unknown;
If *unconſider'd* too, a dreadful ſcene!
All ſhould be prophets to themſelves; foreſee
Their future fate; their future fate foretaſte;
This art would waſte the bitterneſs of death.
The *thought* of death alone, the *fear* deſtroys
A diſaffection to that precious thought

Is more than *midnight* darkneſs on the ſoul,
Which ſleeps beneath it, on a *precipice*,
Puff'd off by the firſt blaſt, and loſt for ever.
Doſt aſk, Lorenzo, why ſo warmly preſt,
By repetition hammer'd on thine ear,
The thought of death? That thought is the machine,
The grand machine! that heaves us from the duſt,
And rears us into men. That thought, ply'd home,
Will ſoon reduce the ghaſtly *precipice*
O'er-hanging hell, will ſoften the deſcent,
And gently ſlope our paſſage to the grave;
How warmly to be wiſh'd! What heart of fleſh
Would trifle with tremendous? dare extremes?
Yawn o'er the fate of infinite? What hand,
Beyond the blackeſt brand of cenſure bold,
(To ſpeak a language *too well* known to Thee)
Would at a moment give its *All* to chance,
And *ſtamp* the die for an eternity?
Aid me, Narciſſa! aid me to keep pace
With *deſtiny*; and ere her ſciſſars cut
My thread of life, to break this tougher thread
Of moral death, that ties me to the world.
Sting thou my ſlumbering *reaſon* to ſend forth
A thought of obſervation on the foe;
To ſally; and ſurvey the rapid march
Of his ten thouſand meſſengers to man;
Who, Jehu-like, behind him turns them all.
All *accident* apart, by *nature* ſign'd,
My warrant is gone out, though dormant yet;
Perhaps behind one moment lurks my fate.

Muſt

Muſt I then *forward* only look for death?
Backward I turn mine eye, and find him there.
Man is a ſelf-ſurvivor every year.
Man, like a ſtream, is in perpetual flow.
Death 's a deſtroyer of quotidian prey.
My *youth*, my *noon-tide*, His; my *yeſterday*;
The bold invader ſhares the *preſent* hour.
Each moment on the former ſhuts the grave.
While man is growing, life is in decreaſe;
And cradles rock us nearer to the tomb.
Our birth is nothing but our death begun;
As tapers waſte, that inſtant they take fire.

Shall we then fear, leſt that ſhould come to paſs,
Which comes to paſs each moment of our lives?
If fear we muſt, let *that* death turn us pale,
Which murders *ſtrength* and *ardour*; what remains
Should rather call on death, than dread his call.
Ye partners of my fault, and my decline!
Thoughtleſs of death, but when your neighbour's knell
(Rude viſitant!) knocks hard at your dull ſenſe,
And with its thunder ſcarce obtains your ear!
Be death your theme, in every place and hour;
Nor longer want, ye monumental Sires!
A brother tomb to tell you ye ſhall die.
That death you *dread* (ſo great is nature's ſkill!)
Know, you ſhall *court* before you ſhall enjoy.

But you are learn'd; in volumes, deep you ſit;
In wiſdom, ſhallow: pompous ignorance!
Would you be ſtill more learned than the learn'd?
Learn well to know how much need not be known,

And what that *knowledge*, which impairs your *ſenſe*.
Our needful knowledge, like our needful food,
Unhedg'd, lies open in life's common field;
And bids all welcome to the vital feaſt.
You ſcorn what lies before you in the page
Of *nature*, and *experience*, moral truth;
Of indiſpenſable, eternal fruit;
Fruit, on which mortals feeding, turn to gods:
And dive in *ſcience* for diſtinguiſh'd names,
Diſhoneſt fomentation of your pride!
Sinking in virtue, as you riſe in fame.
Your learning, like the *lunar* beam, affords
Light, but not heat; it leaves you undevout,
Frozen at heart, while ſpeculation ſhines.
Awake, ye curious indagators! fond
Of knowing all, but what avails you known.
If you would learn *death's character*, attend.
All caſts of conduct, all degrees of health,
All dies of fortune, and all dates of age,
Together ſhook in his impartial urn,
Come forth at random: or, if choice is made,
The choice is quite *ſarcaſtic*, and inſults
All bold conjecture, and fond hopes of man.
What countleſs multitudes not only *leave*,
But deeply *diſappoint* us, by their deaths!
Though great our ſorrow, greater our ſurprize.
Like other tyrants, *death* delights to ſmite,
What, ſmitten, moſt proclaims the pride of power,
And arbitrary nod. His joy ſupreme,
To bid the wretch ſurvive the fortunate;

The

The feeble wrap th' athletic in his ſhroud;
And weeping fathers build their childrens tomb:
Me Thine, Narciſſa!—What though ſhort thy date?
Virtue, not rolling ſuns, the mind matures.
That life is long, which anſwers life's great end.
The time that bears no fruit, deſerves no name;
The man of wiſdom is the man of years.
In hoary youth Methuſalems may die;
O how *miſdated* on their flattering tombs!
Narciſſa's *youth* has lectur'd me thus far.
And can her *gaiety* give counſel too?
That, like the Jews fam'd oracle of gems,
Sparkles inſtruction; ſuch as throws new light,
And opens more the *character of death*;
Ill known to thee, Lorenzo! *This* thy vaunt:
"Give death his due, the wretched, and the old;
"Ev'n let him ſweep his rubbiſh to the grave;
"Let him not violate kind nature's laws,
"But own man born to *live* as well as *die*."
Wretched and *old* thou giv'ſt him; *young* and *gay*
He takes; and *plunder* is a tyrant's joy.
What if I prove, "That fartheſt from the *fear*,
"Are often neareſt to the *ſtroke* of Fate?"
All, more than common, menaces an end.
A blaze betokens brevity of life:
As if bright embers ſhould emit a flame,
Glad ſpirits ſparkled from Narciſſa's eye,
And made youth younger, and taught life to live.
As nature's oppoſites wage endleſs war,
For *this* offence, as treaſon to the deep

Inviolable ſtupor of his reign,
Where *luſt*, and turbulent *ambition*, ſleep,
Death took ſwift vengeance. As he life deteſts,
More life is ſtill more odious; and, reduc'd
By conqueſt, aggrandizes more his power.
But *wherefore* aggrandiz'd? By heaven's decree,
To plant the ſoul on her eternal guard,
In aweful expectation of our end.
Thus runs death's dread commiſſion: "Strike, but *ſo*
"As moſt alarms the living by the dead."
Hence *ſtratagem* delights him, and *ſurprize*,
And cruel ſport with man's ſecurities.
Not ſimple conqueſt, triumph is his aim;
And, where leaſt fear'd, there conqueſt triumphs moſt.
This proves my bold aſſertion not too bold.
What are *his* arts to lay our fears aſleep?
Tiberian arts his purpoſes wrap up
In deep diſſimulation's darkeſt night.
Like princes unconfeſt in foreign courts,
Who travel under cover, *death* aſſumes
The name and look of *life*, and dwells among us.
He takes all ſhapes that ſerve his black deſigns:
Though maſter of a wider empire far
Than that, o'er which the Roman eagle flew.
Like Nero, he 's a fidler, charioteer,
Or drives his *phaeton*, in female guiſe;
Quite unſuſpected, till, the wheel beneath,
His diſarray'd oblation he devours.
He moſt affects the forms leaſt like himſelf,
His ſlender ſelf. Hence burly corpulence

Is his familiar wear, and ſleek diſguiſe.
Behind the roſy bloom he loves to lurk,
Or ambuſh in a ſmile; or wanton dive
In dimples deep; love's eddies, which draw in
Unwary hearts, and ſink them in deſpair.
Such, on Narciſſa's couch he loiter'd long
Unknown; and, when detected, ſtill was ſeen
To *ſmile*; ſuch peace has innocence in death!
Moſt happy they! whom leaſt his arts deceive.
One eye on *death*, and one full fix'd on *heaven*,
Becomes a mortal, and immortal man.
Long on his wiles a piqu'd and jealous ſpy,
I've ſeen, or dreamt I ſaw, the tyrant *dreſs*;
Lay by his horrors, and put on his ſmiles.
Say, Muſe, for thou remember'ſt, call it back,
And ſhew Lorenzo the ſurpriſing ſcene;
If 'twas a dream, his genius can explain.
'Twas in a circle of the *gay* I ſtood.
Death would have enter'd; *Nature* puſh'd him back;
Supported by a doctor of renown,
His point he gain'd. Then artfully *diſmiſt*
The ſage; for *death* deſign'd to be conceal'd.
He gave an old vivacious *uſurer*
His meagre aſpect, and his naked bones;
In gratitude for plumping up his prey,
A pamper'd *ſpendthrift*; whoſe fantaſtic air,
Well-faſhion'd figure, and cockaded brow,
He took in change, and underneath the pride
Of coſtly linen, tuck'd his filthy ſhroud.
His crooked bow he ſtraiten'd to a cane;

And hid his deadly ſhafts in Myra's eye.
The dreadful maſquerader, thus equipt,
Out-ſallies on adventures. Aſk you where?
Where is he not? For his peculiar haunts,
Let *this* ſuffice; ſure as night follows day,
Death treads in *pleaſure's* footſteps round the world,
When *pleaſure* treads the paths, which *reaſon* ſhuns.
When, againſt *reaſon*, *riot* ſhuts the door,
And *gaiety* ſupplies the place of *ſenſe*,
Then, foremoſt at the banquet and the ball,
Death leads the dance, or ſtamps the deadly die;
Nor ever fails the midnight bowl to crown.
Gaily carouſing to his gay compeers,
Inly he laughs, to ſee them laugh at him,
As abſent far: and when the revel burns,
When *fear* is baniſh'd, and triumphant thought,
Calling for all the joys beneath the moon,
Againſt him turns the key; and bids him ſup
With their progenitors—He drops his maſk;
Frowns out at full; they ſtart, deſpair, expire.
Scarce with more ſudden terror and ſurprize,
From his black maſque of nitre, touch'd by fire,
He burſts, expands, roars, blazes, and devours.
And is not this triumphant treachery,
And *more than ſimple conqueſt*, in the fiend?
And now, Lorenzo, doſt thou wrap thy ſoul
In ſoft ſecurity, becauſe unknown
Which moment is commiſſion'd to deſtroy?
In *death's* uncertainty thy danger lies.
Is *death* uncertain? Therefore Thou be fixt;

Fixt

Fixt as a centinel, all eye, all ear,
All expectation of the coming foe.
Rouſe, ſtand in arms, nor lean againſt thy ſpear;
Leſt ſlumber ſteal one moment o'er thy ſoul,
And *fate* ſurprize thee nodding. Watch, be ſtrong;
Thus give each day the merit, and renown,
Of dying well; though doom'd but once to die.
Nor let life's *period* hidden (as from moſt)
Hide too from Thee the precious *uſe* of life.
  Early, not ſudden, was Narciſſa's fate.
Soon, not ſurpriſing, *death* his viſit paid.
Her thought went forth to meet him on his way,
Nor *gaiety* forgot it was to die:
Though *fortune* too (our third and final theme),
As an accomplice, play'd her gaudy plumes,
And every glittering gewgaw, on her ſight,
To dazzle, and debauch it from its mark.
Death's dreadful advent is the mark of man;
And every thought that miſſes it, is blind.
Fortune, with *youth* and *gaiety*, conſpir'd
To weave a *triple* wreath of happineſs
(If happineſs on earth) to crown her brow.
And could *death* charge through ſuch a ſhining ſhield?
  That ſhining ſhield *invites* the tyrant's ſpear,
As if to damp our elevated aims,
And ſtrongly preach humility to man.
O how portentous is proſperity!
How, comet-like, it threatens, while it ſhines!
Few years but yield us proof of *death's* ambition,
To cull his victims from the faireſt fold,

And

And ſheath his ſhafts in all the pride of life.
When flooded with abundance, purpled o'er
With recent honours, bloom'd with every bliſs,
Set up in oſtentation, made the gaze,
The gaudy centre, of the public eye,
When *fortune* thus has toſs'd her child in air,
Snatcht from the covert of an humble ſtate,
How often have I ſeen him dropt at once,
Our morning's envy! and our evening's ſigh!
As if her bounties were the ſignal given,
The flowery wreath to mark the ſacrifice,
And call death's arrows on the deſtin'd prey.
High fortune ſeems in cruel league with *fate*.
Aſk you for what? To give his war on man
The deeper dread, and more illuſtrious ſpoil;
Thus to keep daring mortals more in awe.
And burns Lorenzo ſtill for the ſublime
Of life? To hang his airy neſt on high,
On the ſlight timber of the topmoſt bough,
Rockt at each breeze, and menacing a fall?
Granting grim *death* at equal diſtance *there*;
Yet *peace* begins juſt where *ambition* ends.
What makes man wretched? Happineſs *deny'd*?
Lorenzo! no: 'Tis happineſs *diſdain'd*.
She comes too meanly dreſt to win our ſmile;
And calls herſelf *Content*, a homely name!
Our flame is *tranſport*, and *content* our ſcorn.
Ambition turns, and ſhuts the door againſt her,
And weds a *toil*, a *tempeſt*, in her ſtead;
A *tempeſt* to warm *tranſport* near of kin.

Unknowing

Unknowing what our mortal ſtate admits,
Life's modeſt joys we ruin, while we raiſe;
And all our ecſtaſies are wounds to peace;
Peace, the full portion of mankind below.
And ſince thy peace is dear, ambitious youth!
Of fortune fond! as thoughtleſs of thy fate!
As late I drew *death's* picture, to ſtir up
Thy wholſome fears; now, drawn in contraſt, ſee
Gay *fortune's*, thy vain hopes to reprimand.
See, high in air, the ſportive goddeſs hangs,
Unlocks her caſket, ſpreads her glittering ware,
And calls the giddy winds to puff abroad
Her random bounties o'er the gaping throng.
All ruſh rapacious; friends o'er trodden friends;
Sons o'er their fathers, ſubjects o'er their kings,
Prieſts o'er their gods, and lovers o'er the fair,
(Still *more* ador'd) to ſnatch the golden ſhower.
Gold glitters moſt, where *virtue* ſhines no more;
As ſtars from abſent ſuns have leave to ſhine.
O what a precious pack of votaries
Unkennel'd from the priſons, and the ſtews,
Pour in, all opening in their idol's praiſe;
All, ardent, eye each wafture of her hand,
And, wide-expanding their voracious jaws,
Morſel on morſel ſwallow down unchew'd,
Untaſted, through mad appetite for more;
Gorg'd to the throat, yet lean and ravenous ſtill.
Sagacious All, to trace the ſmalleſt game,
And bold to ſeize the greateſt. If (bleſt chance!)
Court-zephyrs ſweetly breathe, they launch, they fly,

O'er

O'er juſt, o'er ſacred, all-forbidden ground,
Drunk with the burning ſcent of place or power,
Staunch to the foot of lucre, till they die.
Or, if for men you take them, as I mark
Their manners, thou their various fates ſurvey.
With aim miſ-meaſur'd, and impetuous ſpeed,
Some darting, ſtrike their ardent wiſh far off,
Through fury to poſſeſs it: *Some* ſucceed,
But ſtumble, and let fall the taken prize.
From *ſome*, by ſudden blaſts, 'tis whirl'd away,
And lodg'd in boſoms that ne'er dreamt of gain.
To *ſome* it ſticks ſo cloſe, that, when torn off,
Torn is the man, and mortal is the wound.
Some, o'er-enamour'd of their bags, run mad,
Groan under gold, yet weep for want of bread.
Together *ſome* (unhappy rivals!) ſeize,
And rend abundance into poverty;
Loud croaks the raven of the law, and ſmiles:
Smiles too the goddeſs; but ſmiles moſt at thoſe,
(Juſt victims of exorbitant deſire!)
Who periſh at their own requeſt, and, whelm'd
Beneath her load of laviſh grants, expire.
Fortune is famous for her numbers ſlain,
The number ſmall, which happineſs can bear.
Though *various* for a while their fates; at laſt
One curſe involves them all: at death's approach,
All read their riches backward into loſs,
And mourn, in juſt proportion to their ſtore.
And *death's* approach (if orthodox my ſong)
Is haſten'd by the lure of *fortune's* ſmiles.

And

And art thou ſtill a glutton of bright gold?
And art thou ſtill rapacious of thy ruin?
Death loves a ſhining mark, a ſignal blow;
A blow, which, while it executes, alarms;
And ſtartles thouſands with a ſingle fall.
As when ſome ſtately growth of oak, or pine,
Which nods aloft, and proudly ſpreads her ſhade,
The ſun's defiance, and the flock's defence;
By the ſtrong ſtrokes of labouring hinds ſubdued,
Loud groans her laſt, and, ruſhing from her height,
In cumbrous ruin, thunders to the ground:
The conſcious foreſt trembles at the ſhock,
And hill, and ſtream, and diſtant dale, reſound.
Theſe high-aim'd darts of *death*, and theſe alone,
Should I collect, my quiver would be full.
A quiver, which, ſuſpended in mid air,
Or near heaven's *archer*, in the zodiack, hung,
(So could it be) *ſhould* draw the public eye,
The gaze and contemplation of mankind!
A conſtellation awful, yet benign,
To guide the *gay* through life's tempeſtuous wave;
Nor ſuffer them to ſtrike the common rock,
"From greater danger to grow more ſecure,
"And, wrapt in happineſs, forget their fate."
Lyſander, happy paſt the common lot,
Was warn'd of danger, but too *gay* to fear.
He woo'd the fair Aſpaſia: ſhe was kind:
In youth, form, fortune, fame, they both were bleſt:
All who knew, envy'd; yet in envy lov'd:
Can fancy form more finiſht happineſs?

Fixt was the nuptial hour. Her ſtately dome
Roſe on the ſounding beach. The glittering ſpires
Float in the wave, and break againſt the ſhore:
So break thoſe glittering ſhadows, human joys.
The faithleſs morning ſmil'd: he takes his leave,
To re-embrace, in ecſtaſies, at eve.
The riſing ſtorm forbids. The news arrives:
Untold, ſhe ſaw it in her ſervant's eye.
She felt it ſeen (her heart was apt to feel);
And, drown'd, without the furious ocean's aid,
In ſuffocating ſorrows, ſhares his tomb.
Now, round the ſumptuous, bridal monument,
The guilty billows innocently roar;
And the rough ſailor paſſing, drops a tear.
A tear?—Can tears ſuffice?—But not for *me*.
How vain our efforts! and our arts how vain!
The *diſtant* train of thought I took to ſhun,
Has thrown me on my fate—*Theſe* died together;
Happy in ruin! *undivorc'd* by death!
Or ne'er to meet, or ne'er to part, is peace—
Narciſſa! Pity bleeds at thought of thee.
Yet thou waſt only *near* me; not *myſelf*.
Survive *myſelf?*—*That* cures all other woe.
Narciſſa lives; Philander is forgot.
O the ſoft commerce! O the tender tyes,
Cloſe-twiſted with the fibres of the heart!
Which, broken, break them; and drain off the ſoul
Of human joy; and make it pain to live—
And is it then to live? When *ſuch* friends part,
'Tis the ſurvivor dies—My heart, no more.

NIGHT

NIGHT THE SIXTH.

THE INFIDEL RECLAIMED.

IN TWO PARTS.

Containing the NATURE, PROOF, and IMPORTANCE, of IMMORTALITY.

PART THE FIRST.

Where, among other Things, GLORY and RICHES are particularly conſidered.

TO

THE RIGHT HON. HENRY PELHAM,

FIRST LORD COMMISSIONER OF THE TREASURY, AND CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.

PREFACE.

FEW ages have been deeper in diſpute about religion than this. The diſpute about religion, and the practice of it, ſeldom go together. The ſhorter, therefore, the diſpute the better. I think it may be reduced to this ſingle queſtion, *Is man immortal, or is he not?* If he is not, all our diſputes are mere amuſements, or trials of ſkill. In this caſe, *truth*, *reaſon*, *religion*, which give our diſcourſes ſuch pomp and ſolemnity,

ſolemnity, are (as will be ſhewn) mere empty ſound, without any meaning in them. But if man is immortal, it will behove him to be very ſerious about eternal conſequences; or, in other words, to be truly religious. And this great fundamental truth, unеſtabliſhed, or unawakened in the minds of men, is, I conceive, the *real* ſource and ſupport of all our infidelity; how remote ſoever the particular objections advanced may ſeem to be from it.

Senſible appearances affect moſt men much more than *abſtract reaſonings*; and we daily ſee *bodies* drop around us, but the *ſoul* is inviſible. The power which *inclination* has over the *judgment*, is greater than can be well conceived by thoſe that have not had an experience of it; and of what numbers is it the ſad intereſt that ſouls ſhould not ſurvive! The heathen world confeſſed, that they *rather* hoped, than firmly *believed* immortality! And how many heathens have we ſtill amongſt us! The ſacred page aſſures us, that life and immortality is brought to light by the Goſpel: but by how many is the Goſpel rejected, or overlooked! From theſe conſiderations, and from my being, accidentally, privy to the ſentiments of ſome particular perſons, I have been long perſuaded that moſt, if not all, our infidels (whatever name they take, and whatever ſcheme, for argument's ſake, and to keep themſelves in countenance, they patronize) are ſupported in their deplorable error, by ſome doubt of their *immortality*, at the bottom. And I am ſatisfied, that men once thoroughly convinced of their immortality, are not far from being

Chriſtians. For it is hard to conceive, that a man fully conſcious eternal pain or happineſs will certainly be his lot, ſhould not earneſtly, and impartially, enquire after the ſureſt means of eſcaping one, and ſecuring the other. And of ſuch an earneſt and impartial inquiry, I well know the conſequence.

Here, therefore, in proof of this moſt fundamental truth, ſome plain arguments are offered; arguments derived from principles which Infidels admit in common with Believers; arguments, which appear to me altogether irreſiſtible; and ſuch as, I am ſatisfied, will have great weight with all, who give themſelves the ſmall trouble of looking ſeriouſly into their own boſoms, and of obſerving, with any tolerable degree of attention, what daily paſſes round about them in the world. If ſome arguments ſhall, *here*, occur, which others have declined, they are ſubmitted, with all deference, to better judgments in this, of all points the *moſt* important. For, as to the Being of a God, that is no longer diſputed; but it is undiſputed for this reaſon *only*; *viz.* becauſe, where the leaſt pretence to reaſon is admitted; it muſt for ever be indiſputable. And of conſequence no man can be betrayed into a diſpute of that nature by *vanity*; which has a principal ſhare in animating our modern combatants againſt other articles of our Belief.

NIGHT VI.

SHE * (for I know not yet her name in heaven)
Not early, like Narciſſa, left the ſcene;
Nor ſudden, like Philander. What avail?
This ſeeming mitigation but inflames;
This fancy'd medicine heightens the diſeaſe.
The longer known, the cloſer ſtill ſhe grew;
And gradual parting is a gradual death.
'Tis the grim tyrant's engine, which extorts,
By tardy preſſure's ſtill encreaſing weight,
From hardeſt hearts, confeſſion of diſtreſs.
O the long, dark approach through years of pain,
Death's gallery! (might I dare to call it ſo)
With diſmal *doubt*, and ſable *terror*, hung;
Sick *hope's* pale lamp its only glimmering ray:
There, fate my melancholy walk ordain'd,
Forbid *ſelf-love* itſelf to flatter, there.
How oft I gaz'd, prophetically ſad!
How oft I ſaw her dead, while yet in ſmiles!
In ſmiles ſhe ſunk *her* grief to leſſen *mine*.
She ſpoke me comfort, and increas'd my pain.
Like powerful armies trenching at a town,
By ſlow, and ſilent, but reſiſtleſs ſap,
In his pale progreſs gently gaining ground,
Death urg'd his deadly ſiege; in ſpite of art,
Of all the balmy bleſſings nature lends
To ſuccour frail humanity. Ye ſtars!
(Not now *firſt* made familiar to my ſight)

And

* Referring to Night V.

And thou, O moon! bear witneſs; many a night
He tore the pillow from beneath my head,
Ty'd down by ſore attention to the ſhock,
By ceaſeleſs depredations on a life
Dearer than that he left me. Dreadful poſt
Of obſervation! darker every hour!
Leſs dread the day that drove me to the brink,
And pointed at eternity below;
When my ſoul ſhudder'd at futurity;
When, on a moment's point, th' important dye,
Of life and death ſpun doubtful, ere it fell,
And turn'd up life; my title to more woe.
But why more woe? More comfort let it be.
Nothing is dead, but that which wiſh'd to die;
Nothing is dead, but wretchedneſs and pain;
Nothing is dead, but what incumber'd, gall'd,
Block'd up the paſs, and barr'd from *real life.*
Where dwells *that* wiſh moſt ardent of the wiſe?
Too dark the ſun to ſee it; higheſt ſtars
Too low to reach it; *death*, great *death* alone,
O'er ſtars and ſun, triumphant, lands us there.
Nor dreadful our *tranſition*; though the mind,
An artiſt at creating ſelf-alarms,
Rich in expedients for inquietude,
Is prone to paint it dreadful. Who can take
Death's portrait true? The tyrant never *ſat.*
Our ſketch all random ſtrokes, conjecture all;
Cloſe ſhuts the grave, nor tells one ſingle tale.
Death, and his image riſing in the brain,
Bear faint reſemblance; never are alike;

Fear ſhakes the pencil; *Fancy* loves exceſs;
Dark *Ignorance* is laviſh of her ſhades:
And *theſe* the formidable picture draw.
But grant the worſt; 'tis paſt; new proſpects riſe;
And drop a veil eternal o'er her tomb.
Far other views our contemplation claim,
Views that o'erpay the rigours of our life;
Views that ſuſpend our agonies in death.
Wrapt in the thought of *immortality*,
Wrapt in the ſingle, the triumphant thought!
Long life might lapſe, age unperceiv'd come on;
And find the ſoul unſated with her theme.
Its *nature*, *proof*, *importance*, fire my ſong.
O that my ſong could emulate my ſoul!
Like her, immortal. No!—the ſoul diſdains
A mark ſo mean; far nobler hope inflames;
If endleſs ages can outweigh an hour,
Let not the *laurel*, but the *palm*, inſpire.
Thy *nature*, immortality! who knows?
And yet who knows it not? It is but life
In ſtronger thread of brighter colour ſpun,
And ſpun for ever; dipt by cruel fate
In Stygian dye, how *black*, how *brittle here!*
How ſhort our correſpondence with the ſun!
And while it laſts, inglorious! Our beſt deeds,
How wanting in their weight! Our higheſt joys
Small cordials to ſupport us in our pain,
And give us ſtrength to ſuffer. But how *great*
To mingle intereſts, converſe, amities,
With all the ſons of *reaſon*, ſcatter'd wide

Through

Through habitable ſpace, wherever born,
Howe'er endow'd! To live free citizens
Of univerſal nature! To lay hold
By more than feeble *faith* on the *Supreme!*
To call heaven's rich unfathomable mines
(Mines, which ſupport archangels in their ſtate)
Our own! To riſe in ſcience, as in bliſs,
Initiate in the ſecrets of the ſkies!
To read creation; read its mighty plan
In the bare boſom of the Deity!
The plan, and execution, to collate!
To ſee, before each glance of piercing thought,
All cloud, all ſhadow, blown remote; and leave
No myſtery—but that of Love Divine,
Which lifts us on the ſeraph's flaming wing,
From earth's *aceldama*, this field of blood,
Of inward anguiſh, and of outward ill,
From darkneſs, and from duſt, to *ſuch* a ſcene!
Love's element! true joy's illuſtrious home!
From earth's ſad contraſt (now deplor'd) more fair!
What exquiſite viciſſitude of fate!
Bleſt abſolution of our blackeſt hour!
Lorenzo, theſe are thoughts that make man Man,
The wiſe illumine, aggrandize the great.
How great (while yet we tread the kindred clod,
And every moment fear to ſink beneath
The clod *we* tread; ſoon trodden by our ſons)
How great, in the wild whirl of *Time's* purſuits,
To ſtop, and pauſe, involv'd in high preſage,
Through the long viſto of a thouſand years,

To ſtand contemplating our diſtant ſelves,
As in a magnifying mirror ſeen,
Enlarg'd, Ennobled, Elevate, Divine!
To propheſy our own futurities;
To gaze in thought on what all thought tranſcends!
To talk, with fellow-candidates, of joys
As far beyond conception as deſert,
Ourſelves th' aſtoniſh'd talkers, and the tale!
Lorenzo, ſwells thy boſom at the thought?
The ſwell becomes thee: 'Tis an honeſt pride.
Revere thyſelf;—and yet thyſelf deſpiſe.
His *nature* no man can o'er-rate; and none
Can under-rate his *merit*. Take good heed,
Nor there be modeſt, where thou ſhould'ſt be proud;
That almoſt univerſal error ſhun.
How *juſt* our pride, when we behold *thoſe* heights!
Not thoſe *ambition* paints in air, but thoſe
Reaſon points out, and ardent *virtue* gains;
And angels emulate; our pride how juſt!
When mount we? When theſe ſhackles caſt? When quit
This cell of the creation? This ſmall neſt,
Stuck in a corner of the univerſe,
Wrapt up in fleecy cloud, and fine-ſpun air?
Fine-ſpun to ſenſe; but groſs and feculent
To ſouls celeſtial; ſouls ordain'd to breathe
Ambroſial gales, and drink a purer ſky;
Greatly triumphant on *Time's* farther ſhore,
Where *virtue* reigns, enrich'd with full arrears;
While *pomp imperial* begs an alms of peace.
In empire high, or in proud ſcience deep,

Ye

Ye born of earth! on what can you confer,
With half the dignity, with half the gain,
The guſt, the glow of rational delight,
As on *this* theme, which angels praiſe and ſhare?
Man's fates and favours are a theme in heaven.
What wretched repetition cloys us *here!*
What periodic potions for the ſick!
Diſtemper'd bodies! and diſtemper'd minds!
In an *Eternity*, what ſcenes ſhall ſtrike!
Adventures thicken! novelties ſurprize!
What webs of wonder ſhall unravel, *there!*
What full day pour on all the paths of heaven,
And light th' Almighty's footſteps in the deep!
How ſhall the bleſſed day of our diſcharge
Unwind, at once, the labyrinths of fate,
And ſtraiten its inextricable maze!
If inextinguiſhable thirſt in man
To know; how rich, how full, our banquet *there!*
There, not the *moral* world alone unfolds;
The world *material*, lately ſeen in ſhades,
And, in thoſe ſhades, by fragments only ſeen,
And ſeen thoſe fragments by the *labouring* eye,
Unbroken, then, illuſtrious and intire,
Its ample ſphere, its univerſal frame,
In full dimenſions, ſwells to the ſurvey;
And enters, at one glance, the raviſht ſight.
From ſome ſuperior point (where, who can tell?
Suffice it, 'tis a point where gods reſide)
How ſhall the ſtranger man's illumin'd eye,
In the vaſt ocean of unbounded ſpace,

Behold an infinite of floating worlds
Divide the cryſtal waves of æther pure,
In endleſs voyage, without port? The *leaſt*
Of theſe diſſeminated orbs, how great!
Great as they are, what numbers Theſe ſurpaſs,
Huge, as Leviathan, to that ſmall race,
Thoſe twinkling multitudes of little life,
He ſwallows unperceiv'd? *Stupendous* Theſe!
Yet what are theſe ſtupendous to the *whole?*
As particles, as atoms ill perceiv'd;
As circulating globules in our veins;
So vaſt the plan. Fecundity divine!
Exuberant Source! perhaps, I wrong thee ſtill.
If admiration is a ſource of joy,
What tranſport hence! yet this the leaſt in heaven.
What *this* to that illuſtrious robe *He* wears,
Who toſt this maſs of wonders from his hand,
A ſpecimen, an earneſt of his power?
'Tis to *that glory*, whence all glory flows,
As the mead's meaneſt floweret to the ſun,
Which gave it birth. But what, this ſun of heaven?
This bliſs ſupreme of the ſupremely bleſt?
Death, only death, the queſtion can reſolve.
By death, cheap-bought th' ideas of our joy;
The *bare* ideas! ſolid happineſs
So diſtant from its ſhadow chas'd below.
And chaſe we ſtill the phantom through the fire,
O'er bog, and brake, and precipice, till death?
And toil we ſtill for ſublunary pay?
Defy the dangers of the field and flood,

Or,

Or, ſpider-like, ſpin out our precious All,
Our *more* than vitals ſpin (if no regard
To great futurity) in curious webs
Of ſubtle thought, and exquiſite deſign;
(Fine net-work of the brain!) to catch a fly!
The momentary buz of vain renown!
A *name!* a mortal immortality!
Or (meaner ſtill!) inſtead of graſping air,
For ſordid *lucre* plunge we in the mire?
Drudge, ſweat, through every ſhame, for every gain,
For vile contaminating traſh; throw up
Our hope in heaven, our dignity with man?
And deify the dirt, matur'd to gold?
Ambition, avarice; the two *dæmons* theſe,
Which goad through every ſlough our human herd,
Hard travel'd from the cradle to the grave.
How low the wretches ſtoop! How ſteep they climb!
Theſe *dæmons* burn mankind; but moſt poſſeſs
Lorenzo's boſom, and turn out the ſkies.
Is it in *time* to hide *eternity?*
And why not in an atom on the ſhore
To cover ocean? or a mote, the ſun?
Glory and *wealth!* have they this blinding power?
What if to *them* I prove Lorenzo blind?
Would it ſurprize thee? Be thou then ſurpriz'd;
Thou *neither* know'ſt: their *nature* learn from me.
Mark well, as foreign as *theſe ſubjects* ſeem,
What cloſe connexion ties them to my theme.
Firſt, what is *true* ambition? The purſuit
Of glory, nothing *leſs* than man can ſhare.

Were they as vain as gaudy-minded man,
As flatulent with fumes of ſelf-applauſe,
Their arts and conqueſts *animals* might boaſt,
And claim their *laurel* crowns, as well as We;
But not *celeſtial*. *Here* we ſtand *alone*;
As in our form, diſtinct, pre-eminent;
If *prone* in thought, our ſtature is our ſhame:
And man ſhould bluſh, his forehead meets the ſkies.
The *viſible* and *preſent* are for brutes,
A ſlender portion! and a narrow bound!
Theſe *reaſon*, with an energy divine,
O'erleaps; and claims the *future* and *unſeen*;
The vaſt unſeen! the future fathomleſs!
When the great ſoul buoys up to this high point,
Leaving groſs *nature's* ſediments below,
Then, and then only, Adam's offspring quits
The ſage and hero of the fields and woods,
Aſſerts his rank, and riſes into man.
This is ambition: This is *human* fire.
Can *parts* or *place* (two bold pretenders!) make
Lorenzo great, and pluck him from the throng?
Genius and *art*, ambition's boaſted wings,
Our boaſt but ill deſerve. A feeble aid!
Dedalian enginery! If Theſe alone
Aſſiſt our flight, *fame's* flight is *glory's* fall.
Heart merit wanting, mount we ne'er ſo high,
Our height is but the gibbet of our name.
A celebrated wretch, when I behold;
When I behold a genius bright, and baſe,
Of towering talents, and terreſtrial aims;

Methinks

Methinks I ſee, as thrown from her high ſphere,
The glorious fragments of a ſoul immortal,
With rubbiſh mix'd, and glittering in the duſt.
Struck at the ſplendid, melancholy ſight,
At once *compaſſion* ſoft, and *envy*, riſe—
But wherefore envy? Talents angel-bright,
If wanting worth, are ſhining inſtruments
In falſe ambition's hand, to finiſh faults
Illuſtrious, and give infamy renown.
Great *ill* is an atchievement of great *powers*.
Plain ſenſe but rarely leads us far aſtray.
Reaſon the means, *affections* chuſe our end;
Means have no merit, if our end amiſs.
If wrong our hearts, our heads are right in vain;
What is a Pelham's head, to Pelham's heart?
Hearts are proprietors of all applauſe.
Right ends, *and* means, make wiſdom: Worldly-wiſe
Is but *half*-witted, at its higheſt praiſe.
Let *genius* then deſpair to make thee great;
Nor flatter *ſtation*: What is ſtation high?
'Tis a proud mendicant; it boaſts, and begs;
It begs an alms of homage from the throng,
And oft the throng denies its charity.
Monarchs and miniſters are awful names;
Whoever wear them, challenge our devoir.
Religion, public order, both exact
External homage, and a ſupple knee,
To beings pompouſly ſet up, to ſerve
The meaneſt ſlave; *all more* is merit's due,
Her ſacred and inviolable right;

Nor

Nor ever paid the *monarch*, but the *man*.
Our hearts ne'er bow but to ſuperior *worth*;
Nor ever fail of their allegiance there.
Fools, indeed, drop the *man* in their account,
And vote the *mantle* into majeſty.
Let the *ſmall ſavage* boaſt his ſilver fur;
His royal robe unborrow'd, and unbought,
His *own*, deſcending fairly from his ſires.
Shall man be proud to wear *his* livery,
And ſouls in *ermin* ſcorn a ſoul without?
Can *place* or leſſen us, or aggrandize?
Pygmies are pygmies ſtill, though perch'd on Alps;
And pyramids are pyramids in vales.
Each man makes his own ſtature, builds himſelf:
Virtue alone outbuilds the *pyramids*:
Her monuments ſhall laſt, when Egypt's fall.
Of theſe ſure truths doſt thou demand the cauſe?
The cauſe is lodg'd in *immortality*.
Hear, and aſſent. Thy boſom burns for power;
What ſtation charms thee? I 'll inſtall thee there;
'Tis thine. And art thou greater than *before*?
Then thou before waſt ſomething *leſs* than man.
Has thy new poſt betray'd thee into pride?
That treacherous pride betrays thy dignity;
That pride defames humanity, and calls
The being mean, which *ſtaffs* or *ſtrings* can raiſe.
That pride, like hooded hawks, in darkneſs ſoars,
From blindneſs bold, and towering to the ſkies.
'Tis born of *ignorance*, which knows not man;
An angel's ſecond; nor his ſecond, long.

A Nero

A Nero quitting his imperial throne,
And courting glory from the tinkling ſtring,
But faintly ſhadows an immortal ſoul,
With empire's ſelf, to pride, or rapture, fir'd.
If nobler motives miniſter no cure,
Ev'n vanity forbids thee to be vain.
High worth is elevated place: 'tis more;
It makes the poſt ſtand candidate for Thee;
Makes more than monarchs, makes an honeſt man;
Though no *exchequer* it commands, 'tis wealth;
And though it wears no *ribband*, 'tis renown;
Renown, that would not quit thee, though diſgrac'd,
Nor leave thee pendent on a maſter's ſmile.
Other ambition *nature* interdicts;
Nature proclaims it moſt abſurd in man,
By pointing at his origin, and end;
Milk, and a ſwathe, *at firſt*, his whole demand;
His whole domain, *at laſt*, a turf, or ſtone;
To whom, *between*, a world may ſeem too ſmall.
Souls *truly* great dart forward on the wing
Of *juſt* ambition, to the grand reſult,
The *curtain's* fall; *there*, ſee the buſkin'd chief
Unſhod behind this momentary ſcene;
Reduc'd to his own ſtature, low or high,
As vice, or virtue, ſinks him, or ſublimes;
And laugh at this fantaſtic mummery,
This antic prelude of groteſque events,
Where dwarfs are often ſtilted, and betray
A littleneſs of ſoul by worlds o'er-run,
And nations laid in blood. Dread ſacrifice

To *Chriſtian* pride! which had with horror ſhock'd
The darkeſt *pagans* offer'd to their gods.
O thou *moſt Chriſtian* enemy to peace!
Again in arms? Again provoking fate?
That prince, and That alone, is truly great,
Who draws the ſword reluctant, gladly ſheathes;
On empire builds what empire far outweighs,
And makes his throne a ſcaffold to the ſkies.
Why *this* ſo rare? Becauſe forgot of all
The day of death; that venerable day,
Which ſits as judge; that day, which ſhall pronounce
On all our days, abſolve them, or condemn.
Lorenzo, never ſhut thy thought againſt it;
Be *levees* ne'er ſo full, afford it room,
And give it audience in the *cabinet*.
That friend conſulted, flatteries apart,
Will tell the fair, if thou art great, or mean.
To doat on aught may leave us, or be left,
Is That *ambition?* Then let flames *deſcend*,
Point to the centre their inverted ſpires,
And learn humiliation from a ſoul,
Which boaſts her lineage from celeſtial fire.
Yet *theſe* are they the world pronounces wiſe;
The world, which cancels nature's right and wrong,
And caſts *new* wiſdom: ev'n the grave man lends
His ſolemn face, to countenance the coin.
Wiſdom for parts is madneſs for the whole.
This ſtamps the paradox, and gives us leave
To call the wiſeſt weak, the richeſt poor,
The moſt ambitious, unambitious, mean;

In

triumph, mean; and abject,
thing can make it leſs than
put forth all his ardour,
d give his ſoul her full
t reaching *Him*, who gave
hen blind ambition quite
d downward pores,
ſtantial happineſs, and
en, like an idiot,
: leap at ſtars, and
glory graſp, and
Ambition! powerful
y ſtrength in
hen diſengag'd
d ſwifter
toys entangle,
urns a curſe;
this dark dungeon,
ſe-grated by the
l proſpect of
d, but for *execution*,
With error in *ambition*
d we Lorenzo
hat if thy rental I
inventory *new* to
here thy *true treaſure?* Gold ſays, "Not in me:"
d, "Not in me," the diamond. Gold is poor;
lia's inſolvent: ſeek it in thyſelf,
k in thy naked ſelf, and find it there;
being ſo deſcended, form'd, endow'd;

Sky-

Sky-born, ſky-guided, ſky-returning race!
Erect, immortal, rational, divine!
In *ſenſes*, which inherit earth, and heavens;
Enjoy the various riches *nature* yields;
Far nobler! *give* the riches they enjoy;
Give taſte to fruits; and harmony to groves;
Their radiant beams to gold, and gold's bright fire;
Take in, at once, the landſcape of the world,
At a ſmall inlet, which a grain might cloſe,
And half create the wondrous world they ſee.
Our *ſenſes*, as our *reaſon*, are divine.
But for the magic organ's powerful charm,
Earth were a rude, uncolour'd chaos, ſtill.
Objects are but th' occaſion; ours th' *exploit*;
Ours is the cloth, the pencil, and the paint,
Which nature's admirable picture draws;
And beautifies creation's ample dome.
Like Milton's Eve, when gazing on the lake,
Man makes the matchleſs image, man admires.
Say then, Shall man, his thoughts all ſent abroad,
Superior wonders in himſelf forgot,
His admiration waſte on objects round,
When heaven makes him the ſoul of all he ſees?
Abſurd! not rare! ſo great, ſo mean, is man.
What wealth in *ſenſes* ſuch as theſe! What wealth
In *fancy*, fir'd to form a fairer ſcene
Than *ſenſe* ſurveys! In *memory's* firm record,
Which, ſhould it periſh, could this world recall
From the dark ſhadows of o'erwhelming years!
In colours freſh, originally bright,

Preſerve

Preſerve its portrait, and report its fate!
What wealth in *intellect*, that ſovereign power!
Which *ſenſe* and *fancy* ſummons to the bar;
Interrogates, approves, or reprehends;
And from the maſs thoſe *underlings* import,
From their materials ſifted, and refin'd,
And in *truth's* balance accurately weigh'd,
Forms *art*, and *ſcience*, *government*, and *law*;
The ſolid baſis, and the beauteous frame,
The vitals, and the grace of *civil* life!
And *manners* (ſad exception!) ſet aſide,
Strikes out, with maſter hand, a copy fair
Of *His* idea, whoſe indulgent thought
Long, long, ere chaos teem'd, plann'd *human* bliſs.
What *wealth* in ſouls that ſoar, dive, range around,
Diſdaining limit, or from place, or time;
And hear at once, in thought extenſive, hear
Th' Almighty *Fiat*, and the *Trumpet's ſound!*
Bold, on creation's outſide walk, and view
What was, and is, and *more* than e'er ſhall be;
Commanding, with omnipotence of thought,
Creations new in fancy's field to riſe!
Souls, that can graſp whate'er th' Almighty made,
And wander wild through things impoſſible!
What *wealth*, in *faculties* of endleſs growth,
In quenchleſs *paſſions* violent to crave,
In *liberty* to chuſe, in *power* to reach,
And in *duration* (how thy riches riſe!)
Duration to *perpetuate*—boundleſs bliſs!

Aſk you, what *power* reſides in feeble man
That bliſs to gain? Is *virtue's*, then, unknown?
Virtue, our preſent peace, our future prize.
Man's unprecarious, natural eſtate,
Improveable at will, in virtue lies;
Its tenure ſure; its income is divine.
High-built abundance, heap on heap! for what?
To breed new wants, and beggar us the more;
Then, make a richer ſcramble for the throng?
Soon as this feeble pulſe, which leaps ſo long
Almoſt by miracle, is tir'd with play,
Like rubbiſh from diſploding engines thrown,
Our magazines of hoarded trifles fly;
Fly diverſe; fly to foreigners, to foes;
New maſters court, and call the former fool
(How juſtly!) for dependance on their ſtay.
Wide ſcatter, firſt, our play-things; then, our duſt.
Doſt court abundance for the ſake of peace?
Learn, and lament thy ſelf-defeated ſcheme:
Riches enable to be richer ſtill;
And, *richer ſtill*, what mortal can reſiſt?
Thus wealth (a cruel taſk-maſter!) enjoins
New toils, ſucceeding toils, an endleſs train!
And murders peace, which taught it firſt to ſhine.
The poor are *half* as wretched as the rich;
Whoſe proud and painful privilege it is,
At once, to bear a double load of woe;
To feel the ſtings of *envy*, and of *want*,
Outrageous want! both Indies cannot cure.

A com-

A competence is vital to content.
Much wealth is corpulence, if not diſeaſe;
Sick, or incumber'd, is our happineſs,
A *competence* is all we can *enjoy*.
O be content, where heaven can give no more!
More, like a flaſh of water from a lock,
Quickens our ſpirits' movement for an hour;
But ſoon its force is ſpent, nor riſe our joys
Above our native temper's common ſtream.
Hence diſappointment lurks in every prize,
As bees in flowers; and ſtings us with ſucceſs.
The rich man, who denies it, proudly feigns;
Nor knows the wiſe are privy to the lye.
Much learning ſhews how little mortals *know*;
Much wealth, how little worldlings can *enjoy*:
At beſt, it babies us with endleſs toys,
And keeps us children till we drop to duſt.
As monkeys at a mirror ſtand amaz'd,
They fail to find what they ſo plainly ſee;
Thus men, in ſhining riches, ſee the face
Of happineſs, nor know it is a ſhade;
But gaze, and touch, and peep, and peep again,
And wiſh, and wonder it is abſent ſtill.
How few can reſcue opulence from want!
Who lives to *nature*, rarely can be poor;
Who lives to *fancy*, never can be rich.
Poor is the man in debt; the man of gold,
In debt to *fortune*, trembles at her power.
The man of *reaſon* ſmiles at her, and death.
O what a patrimony this! A *being*

Of ſuch inherent ſtrength and majeſty,
Not worlds poſſeſt can raiſe it; worlds deſtroy'd
Can't injure; which holds on its glorious courſe,
When thine, O *Nature!* ends; too bleſt to mourn
Creation's obſequies. What treaſure, *this!*
The *Monarch* is a beggar to the Man.
Immortal! Ages paſt, yet nothing gone!
Morn without eve! a race without a goal!
Unſhorten'd by progreſſion infinite!
Futurity for ever future! Life
Beginning ſtill where computation ends!
'Tis the deſcription of a *Deity!*
'Tis the deſcription of the *meaneſt ſlave:*
The meaneſt ſlave dares then Lorenzo ſcorn?
The meaneſt ſlave thy *ſovereign* glory ſhares.
Proud youth! faſtidious of the *lower* world!
Man's *lawful* pride includes humility;
Stoops to the loweſt; is too great to find
Inferiors; all immortal! brothers all!
Proprietors *eternal* of thy love.
Immortal! What can ſtrike the *ſenſe* ſo ſtrong,
As this the *ſoul?* It thunders to the thought;
Reaſon amazes; *gratitude* o'erwhelms;
No more we ſlumber on the brink of fate;
Rous'd at the ſound, th' exulting ſoul aſcends,
And breathes her native air; an air that feeds
Ambitions high, and fans ethereal fires;
Quick kindles all that is divine within us;
Nor leaves one loitering thought beneath the ſtars.

Has

Has not Lorenzo's boſom caught the flame?
Immortal! Were but *one* immortal, how
Would others envy! How would thrones adore!
Becauſe 'tis common, is the bleſſing loſt?
How *this* ties up the bounteous hand of heaven!
O vain, vain, vain, all elſe! *Eternity!*
A glorious, and a *needful* refuge, *that*,
From vile impriſonment, in abject views.
'Tis *immortality*, 'tis that alone,
Amid life's *pains*, *abaſement*, *emptineſs*,
The ſoul can *comfort*, *elevate*, and *fill*.
That only, and that amply, this performs;
Lifts us above life's pains, her joys above;
Their terror *thoſe*, and *theſe* their luſtre loſe;
Eternity depending covers all;
Eternity depending all atchieves;
Sets earth at diſtance; caſts her into ſhades;
Blends her diſtinctions; abrogates her powers;
The low, the lofty, joyous, and ſevere,
Fortune's dread frowns, and faſcinating ſmiles,
Make one promiſcuous and neglected heap,
The man beneath; if I may call him man,
Whom *Immortality's* full force inſpires.
Nothing terreſtrial touches his high thought;
Suns ſhine unſeen, and thunders roll unheard,
By minds quite conſcious of their high deſcent,
Their preſent province, and their future prize;
Divinely darting upward every wiſh,
Warm on the wing, in glorious *abſence* loſt!

Doubt you this truth? Why labours your belief?
If earth's whole orb by ſome due diſtanc'd eye
Were ſeen at once, her towering Alps would ſink,
And level'd Atlas leave an even ſphere.
Thus *earth*, and all that earthly minds admire,
Is ſwallow'd in *Eternity's* vaſt round.
To that ſtupendous view when ſouls awake,
So large of late, ſo mountainous to man,
Time's toys ſubſide; and *equal* all below.
Enthuſiaſtic, this? Then all are weak,
But rank enthuſiaſts. To this godlike height
Some ſouls have ſoar'd; or martyrs ne'er had bled.
And all *may* do, what has by *man* been done.
Who, beaten by theſe ſublunary ſtorms,
Boundleſs, interminable joys can weigh,
Unrapturid, unexalted, uninflam'd?
What ſlave *unbleſt*, who from to-morrow's dawn
Expects an empire? He forgets his chain,
And, thron'd in thought, his *abſent* ſceptre waves.
And what a ſceptre waits us! what a throne!
Her own immenſe appointments to compute,
Or comprehend her high prerogatives,
In this her dark minority, how toils,
How vainly pants, the human ſoul divine!
Too great the bounty ſeems for earthly joy;
What heart but *trembles* at ſo ſtrange a bliſs?
In ſpite of all the truths the Muſe has ſung,
Ne'er to be priz'd enough! enough revolv'd!
Are there who wrap the world ſo cloſe about them,
They ſee no farther than the clouds; and dance

On

On heedleſs vanity's fantaſtic toe,
Till, ſtumbling at a ſtraw, in their career,
Headlong they plunge, where end both dance and ſong?
Are there, Lorenzo? Is it poſſible?
Are there on earth (let me not call them men)
Who lodge a ſoul immortal in their breaſts;
Unconſcious as the mountain of its ore;
Or rock, of its ineſtimable gem?
When rocks ſhall melt, and mountains vaniſh, *theſe*
Shall know their treaſure; treaſure, *then*, no more.
Are there (ſtill more amazing!) who reſiſt
The riſing thought? who ſmother, in its birth,
The glorious truth? who ſtruggle to be brutes?
Who through this boſom-barrier burſt their way,
And, with revers'd ambition, ſtrive to ſink?
Who labour downwards through th' oppoſing powers
Of inſtinct, reaſon, and the world againſt them,
To diſmal hopes, and ſhelter in the ſhock
Of endleſs night; night darker than the grave's?
Who fight the proofs of immortality?
With horrid zeal, and execrable arts,
Work all their engines, level their black fires,
To blot from man this attribute divine,
(Than vital blood far dearer to the wiſe)
Blaſphemers, and rank atheiſts to *themſelves?*
To contradict them, ſee all nature riſe!
What object, what event, the moon beneath,
But argues, or endears, an after-ſcene?
To *reaſon* proves, or weds it to *deſire?*
All things proclaim it *needful*; ſome advance

One precious ſtep beyond, and prove it *ſure*.
A thouſand arguments ſwarm round my pen,
From *heaven*, and *earth*, and *man*. Indulge a few
By nature, as her *common habit*, worn;
So *preſſing* Providence a truth to teach,
Which truth untaught, all other truths were vain.
Thou! whoſe all-providential Eye ſurveys,
Whoſe Hand directs, whoſe Spirit fills and warms
Creation, and holds empire far beyond!
Eternity's Inhabitant auguſt!
Of two Eternities amazing Lord!
One paſt, ere man's or angel's had begun;
Aid! while I reſcue from the foe's aſſault
Thy glorious Immortality in *man*:
A theme for ever, and for all, of weight,
Of moment infinite! but reliſh'd moſt
By thoſe who love Thee moſt, who moſt adore.
Nature, thy daughter, ever-changing birth
Of Thee the Great *Immutable*, to man
Speaks wiſdom; is his oracle ſupreme;
And he who moſt conſults her, is moſt wiſe.
Lorenzo, to this heavenly Delphos haſte;
And come back all-immortal; all-divine:
Look nature through, 'tis *revolution* all;
All change; no death. Day follows night; and night
The dying day; ſtars riſe, and ſet, and riſe;
Earth takes th' example. See, the Summer gay,
With her green chaplet, and ambroſial flowers,
Droops into pallid Autumn: Winter grey,
Horrid with froſt, and turbulent with ſtorm,

Blows

Blows Autumn, and his golden fruits, away:
Then melts into the Spring: Soft Spring, with breath
Favonian, from warm chambers of the ſouth,
Recalls the *firſt*. All, to re-flouriſh, fades;
As in a wheel, all ſinks, to re-aſcend.
Emblems of man, who paſſes, not expires.
With this minute diſtinction, emblems juſt,
Nature revolves, but man *advances*; both
Eternal, *that* a circle, *this* a line.
That gravitates, *this* ſoars. Th' aſpiring ſoul,
Ardent, and *tremulous*, like flame, aſcends,
Zeal and *humility* her wings, to heaven.
The world of matter, with its various forms,
All dies into new life. Life born from death
Rolls the vaſt maſs, and ſhall for ever roll.
No ſingle atom, once in being, loſt,
With change of counſel charges the Moſt High.
What hence infers Lorenzo? Can it be?
Matter immortal? And ſhall *Spirit* die?
Above the nobler, ſhall leſs noble riſe?
Shall Man alone, for whom all elſe revives,
No reſurrection know? Shall Man alone,
Imperial Man! be ſown in barren ground,
Leſs privileg'd than grain, on which he feeds?
Is Man, in whom alone is power to prize
The bliſs of being, or with previous pain
Deplore its period, by the ſpleen of fate,
Severely doom'd *death's* ſingle unredeem'd?

If nature's *revolution* ſpeaks aloud,
In her *gradation*, hear her louder ſtill.
Look nature through, 'tis neat *gradation* all.
By what minute degrees her ſcale aſcends!
Each middle nature join'd at each extreme,
To that above it join'd, to that beneath.
Parts, into parts reciprocally ſhot,
Abhor divorce: what love of union reigns!
Here, dormant matter waits a call to life;
Half-life, half-death, join there; here, life and ſenſe;
There, ſenſe from reaſon ſteals a glimmering ray;
Reaſon ſhines out in man. But how preſerv'd
The chain unbroken upward, to the realms
Of incorporeal life? thoſe realms of bliſs,
Where death hath no dominion? Grant a make
Half-mortal, half-immortal; earthy, part,
And part ethereal; grant the ſoul of man
Eternal; or in man the ſeries ends,
Wide yawns the gap; connexion is no more;
Check'd *reaſon* halts; her next ſtep wants ſupport;
Striving to climb, ſhe tumbles from her ſcheme;
A ſcheme, *analogy* pronounc'd ſo true;
Analogy, man's ſureſt guide below.
Thus far, *all nature* calls on thy belief.
And will Lorenzo, careleſs of the call,
Falſe atteſtation on all nature charge,
Rather than violate his league with death?
Renounce his reaſon, rather than renounce
The duſt belov'd, and run the *riſque* of heaven?
O what indignity to deathleſs ſouls!

What

What treaſon to the majeſty of man!
Of man *immortal!* Hear the lofty ſtyle:
" If ſo decreed, th' Almighty Will be done.
" Let earth diſſolve, yon pondrous orbs deſcend,
" And grind us into duſt. The *ſoul* is ſafe;
" The *man* emerges; mounts above the wreck,
" As towering flame from *nature's* funeral pyre;
" O'er devaſtation, as a gainer, ſmiles;
" His charter, his inviolable rights,
" Well pleas'd to learn from thunder's impotence,
" Death's pointleſs darts, and hell's defeated ſtorms."
But theſe chimeras touch not thee, Lorenzo!
The glories of the world thy ſevenfold *ſhield.*
Other ambition than of crowns in air,
And ſuperlunary felicities,
Thy boſom warm. I 'll cool it, if I can;
And turn thoſe glories that inchant, againſt thee.
What ties thee to *this* life, proclaims the *next.*
If wiſe, the cauſe that wounds thee is thy cure.
Come, my *ambitious!* let us mount together
(To mount, Lorenzo never can refuſe);
And from the clouds, where pride delights to dwell,
Look down on earth.—What ſeeſt thou? Wondrous things!
Terreſtrial wonders, that eclipſe the ſkies.
What lengths of labour'd lands! what loaded ſeas!
Loaded by man, for pleaſure, wealth, or war!
Seas, winds, and planets, into ſervice brought,
His art acknowledge, and promote his ends.
Nor can th' eternal rocks his will withſtand;

What level'd mountains! and what lifted vales!
O'er vales and mountains ſumptuous cities ſwell,
And gild our landſcape with their glittering ſpires.
Some mid the wondering waves majeſtic riſe;
And Neptune holds a mirror to their charms.
Far greater ſtill! (what cannot mortal might?)
See, wide dominions raviſh'd from the deep!
The narrow'd deep with indignation foams.
Or ſouthward turn; to *delicate* and *grand*,
The finer arts there ripen in the ſun.
How the tall temples, as to meet their gods,
Aſcend the ſkies! the proud triumphal arch
Shews us half heaven beneath its ample bend.
High through mid air, *here*, ſtreams are taught to flow;
Whole rivers, *there*, laid by in baſons, ſleep.
Here, plains turn oceans; *there*, vaſt oceans join
Through kingdoms channel'd deep from ſhore to ſhore;
And chang'd creation takes its face from man.
Beats thy brave breaſt for formidable ſcenes,
Where fame and empire wait upon the ſword?
See fields in blood; hear naval thunders riſe;
Britannia's voice! that awes the world to peace.
How yon enormous mole projecting breaks
The mid-ſea, furious waves! Their roar amidſt,
Out-ſpeaks the Deity, and ſays, "O main!
"Thus far, nor farther; *new* reſtraints obey."
Earth 's diſembowel'd! meaſur'd are the ſkies!
Stars are detected in their deep receſs!
Creation widens! vanquiſh'd *nature* yields!

Her ſecrets are extorted! *art* prevails!
What monument of genius, ſpirit, power!
And now, Lorenzo! raptur'd at this ſcene,
Whoſe glories render heaven ſuperfluous! ſay,
Whoſe footſteps theſe?—*Immortals* have been here.
Could leſs than ſouls immortal this have done?
Earth 's cover'd o'er with proofs of ſouls immortal;
And proofs of immortality *forgot*.
To flatter thy grand foible, I confeſs,
Theſe are *ambition's* works: and theſe are great:
But *this*, the leaſt immortal ſouls can do;
Tranſcend them all—But what can theſe tranſcend?
Doſt aſk me what?—One ſigh for the *diſtreſt*.
What then for *infidels*? A *deeper* ſigh.
'Tis *moral grandeur* makes the mighty man:
How *little* they, who think aught *great* below!
All our ambitions death defeats, but one;
And that it crowns. Here ceaſe we: but, ere long,
More powerful *proof* ſhall take the field againſt thee,
Stronger than death, and ſmiling at the tomb.

NIGHT THE SEVENTH.

BEING

THE SECOND PART

OF

THE INFIDEL RECLAIMED.

CONTAINING

THE NATURE, PROOF, AND IMPORTANCE, OF IMMORTALITY.

PREFACE.

AS we are at war with the power, it were well if we were at war with the manners, of France. A land of *levity* is a land of *guilt*. A *ſerious mind* is the native ſoil of every virtue; and the ſingle character that does true honour to mankind. The *ſoul's immortality* has been the favourite theme with the *ſerious* of all ages. Nor is it ſtrange; it is a ſubject by far the moſt intereſting, and important, that can enter the mind of man. Of higheſt moment this ſubject always *was* and always *will be*. Yet this its higheſt moment ſeems to admit of *increaſe*, at this day; a ſort of *occaſional* importance is ſuperadded to the *natural* weight of it; if that

that opinion which is advanced in the preface to the preceding *Night*, be juſt. It is there ſuppoſed, that all our *infidels*, whatever ſcheme, for argument's ſake, and to keep themſelves in countenance, they patronize, are betrayed into their deplorable error, by ſome doubts of their *immortality*, at the bottom. And the more I conſider this point, the more I am perſuaded of the truth of that opinion. Though the diſtruſt of a *futurity* is a ſtrange error; yet it is an error into which *bad* men may *naturally* be diſtreſſed. For it is impoſſible to bid defiance to final ruin, without ſome refuge in imagination, ſome preſumption of eſcape. And what preſumption is there? There are but two in nature; but two, within the compaſs of human thought. And theſe are—That either God *will* not, or *can* not puniſh. Conſidering the divine attributes, the *firſt* is too groſs to be digeſted by our ſtrongeſt wiſhes. And ſince *omnipotence* is as much a divine attribute as *holineſs*, that God *cannot* puniſh, is as abſurd a ſuppoſition, as the former. God certainly can puniſh as long as wicked men exiſt. In non-exiſtence, therefore, is their only refuge; and, conſequently, non-exiſtence is their ſtrongeſt wiſh. And ſtrong wiſhes have a ſtrange influence on our opinions; they bias the judgment in a manner, almoſt, incredible. And ſince on *this* member of their *alternative*, there are ſome very ſmall *appearances* in their *favour*, and none at all on the *other*, they catch at this reed, they lay hold on this chimæra, to ſave themſelves from the ſhock and horror of an *immediate* and *abſolute* deſpair.

On reviewing my ſubject, by the light which *this* argument, and others of like tendency, threw upon it, I was more inclined than ever to purſue it, as it appeared to me to ſtrike directly at the main root of *all* our infidelity. In the following pages it is, accordingly, purſued at large; and ſome arguments for immortality, new at leaſt to me, are ventured on in them. There alſo the writer has made an attempt to ſet the groſs abſurdities and horrors of *annihilation* in a fuller and more affecting view, than is (I think) to be met with elſewhere.

The gentlemen, for whoſe ſake this attempt was chiefly made, profeſs great admiration for the wiſdom of heathen antiquity: what pity it is they are not ſincere! If they were ſincere, how would it mortify them to conſider, with what contempt and abhorrence their notions would have been received by *thoſe* whom they ſo much admire! What degree of contempt and abhorrence would fall to their ſhare, may be conjectured by the following matter of fact (in my opinion) extremely memorable. Of all their heathen worthies, Socrates (it is well known) was the moſt guarded, diſpaſſionate, and compoſed: yet this great maſter of temper was angry; and angry at his laſt hour; and angry with his friend; and angry for what deſerved acknowledgement; angry for a right and tender inſtance of true friendſhip towards him. Is not this ſurprizing? What could be the cauſe? The cauſe was for his honour; it was a truly noble, though, perhaps, a too punctilious, regard for *immortality*: for his friend

aſking

aſking him, with ſuch an affectionate concern as became a friend, "Where he ſhould depoſit his remains?" it was reſented by Socrates, as implying a diſhonourable ſuppoſition, that he could be ſo mean, as to have a regard for any thing, even in himſelf, that was *not immortal.*

This fact well conſidered would make our infidels withdraw their admiration from Socrates; or make them endeavour, by their imitation of this illuſtrious example, to ſhare his glory: and, conſequently, it would incline them to peruſe the following pages with candour and impartiality: which is all I deſire; and that, for *their* ſakes: for I am perſuaded, that an unprejudiced infidel muſt, neceſſarily, receive ſome advantageous impreſſions from them.

July 7, 1744.

CONTENTS OF THE SEVENTH NIGHT.

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NIGHT

NIGHT VII.

HEAVEN gives the needful, but neglected, call.
What day, what hour, but knocks at human hearts,
To wake the ſoul to ſenſe of future ſcenes?
Deaths ſtand, like Mercurys, in every way,
And kindly point us to our journey's end.
Pope, who couldſt make immortals! art thou dead?
I give thee joy: nor will I take my leave;
So ſoon to follow. Man but dives in death;
Dives from the ſun, in fairer day to riſe;
The grave, his ſubterranean road to bliſs.
Yes, infinite indulgence plann'd it ſo;
Through various parts our glorious ſtory runs;
Time gives the preface, *endleſs age* unrolls
The volume (ne'er unroll'd!) of human fate.
This, earth and *ſkies* * *already* have proclaim'd.
The world 's a prophecy of worlds to come;
And who, what God foretels (who ſpeaks in *things*,
Still louder than in *words*) ſhall dare deny?
If *nature's* arguments appear too weak,
Turn a new leaf, and ſtronger read in *man*.
If man ſleeps on, untaught by what he *ſees*,
Can he prove infidel to what he *feels*?
He, whoſe blind thought futurity denies,
Unconſcious bears, Bellerophon! like thee,
His own indictment; he condemns himſelf;

* Night the Sixth.

Who reads his boſom, reads immortal life;
Or, *nature*, there, impoſing on her ſons,
Has written fables; man was made a *lye*.
Why *diſcontent* for ever harbour'd there?
Incurable conſumption of our peace!
Reſolve me, why the *cottager* and *king*,
He whom ſea-ſever'd realms obey, and he
Who ſteals his whole dominion from the waſte,
Repelling winter blaſts with mud and ſtraw,
Diſquieted alike, draw ſigh for ſigh,
In fate ſo diſtant, in complaint ſo near?
Is it, that things *terreſtrial* can't content?
Deep in rich paſture, will thy flocks complain?
Not ſo; but to their maſter is deny'd
To ſhare their ſweet *ſerene*. Man, ill at eaſe,
In this, not *his own* place, this foreign field,
Where nature fodders him with other food
Than was ordain'd his cravings to ſuffice,
Poor in abundance, famiſh'd at a feaſt,
Sighs on for ſomething *more*, when *moſt* enjoy'd.
Is heaven then kinder to thy flocks than thee?
Not ſo; thy paſture richer, but remote;
In part, remote; for that remoter part
Man bleats from *inſtinct*, though perhaps, debauch'd
By *ſenſe*, his reaſon ſleeps, nor dreams the cauſe.
The cauſe how obvious, when his reaſon wakes!
His grief is but his grandeur in diſguiſe;
And diſcontent is *immortality*.
Shall ſons of æther, ſhall the blood of heaven,
Set up their hopes on earth, and ſtable *here*

With

With brutal acquieſcence in the mire?
Lorenzo! no! they ſhall be nobly pain'd;
The glorious *foreigners*, diſtreſs'd, ſhall ſigh
On thrones; and thou *congratulate* the ſigh:
Man's miſery declares him born for bliſs;
His *anxious* heart aſſerts the truth I ſing,
And gives the *ſceptic* in his head the *lye*.
Our heads, our hearts, our *paſſions*, and our *powers*,
Speak the ſame language; call us to the ſkies;
Unripen'd *theſe* in this inclement clime,
Scarce riſe above conjecture and miſtake;
And for this land of trifles *thoſe* too ſtrong
Tumultuous riſe, and tempeſt human life:
What prize on earth can pay us for the ſtorm?
Meet objects for our *paſſions* heaven ordain'd,
Objects that challenge all their fire, and leave
No fault, but in defect: Bleſt Heaven! avert
A bounded ardour for unbounded bliſs!
O for a bliſs *unbounded!* far beneath
A ſoul immortal, is a mortal joy.
Nor are our *powers* to periſh immature;
But, after feeble effort *here*, beneath
A brighter ſun, and in a nobler ſoil,
Tranſplanted from this ſublunary bed,
Shall flouriſh fair, and put forth all their bloom.
Reaſon progreſſive, *inſtinct* is complete;
Swift *inſtinct* leaps; ſlow *reaſon* feebly climbs.
Brutes ſoon their zenith reach; their little all
Flows in at once; in ages they no more
Could know, or do, or covet, or enjoy.

Were *man* to live coëval with the ſun,
The patriarch-pupil would be learning ſtill;
Yet, dying, leave his leſſon half unlearnt.
Men periſh in advance, as if the ſun
Should ſet ere noon, in *eaſtern* oceans drown'd;
If fit, with *dim*, *illuſtrious* to compare,
The ſun's *meridian* with the *ſoul* of man.
To man, why, ſtep-dame *nature!* ſo ſevere?
Why thrown aſide thy maſter-piece half-wrought,
While meaner efforts thy laſt hand enjoy?
Or, if abortively poor man muſt die,
Nor reach, what reach he might, why die in *dread?*
Why curſt with foreſight? Wiſe to miſery?
Why of his proud prerogative the prey?
Why leſs pre-eminent in rank, than pain?
His *immortality* alone can tell;
Full ample fund to balance all amiſs,
And turn the ſcale in favour of the juſt!
His *immortality* alone can ſolve
The darkeſt of *anigmas*, human *hope*;
Of all the darkeſt, if at death we die.
Hope, eager hope, th' aſſaſſin of our joy,
All *preſent* bleſſings treading under foot,
Is ſcarce a milder tyrant than *deſpair*.
With no paſt toils content, ſtill planning new,
Hope turns us o'er to death alone for eaſe.
Poſſeſſion, why more taſteleſs than *purſuit?*
Why is a wiſh far dearer than a crown?
That wiſh accompliſh'd, why, the grave of bliſs?
Cauſe, in the *great future* bury'd deep,

Beyond.

Beyond our plans of empire, and renown,
Lies *all* that man with ardour ſhould purſue;
And He who made him, bent him to the right.
Man's heart th' Almighty to the *future* ſets,
By ſecret and inviolable ſprings;
And makes his hope his ſublunary joy.
Man's heart eats all things, and is hungry ſtill;
"More, more!" the glutton cries: for ſomething *new*
So rages appetite, if man can't mount,
He *will* deſcend. He ſtarves on the *poſſeſt*.
Hence, the world's maſter, from ambition's ſpire,
In Caprea plung'd; and div'd beneath the brute.
In that rank ſty why wallow'd empire's ſon
Supreme? Becauſe he could no higher fly;
His *riot* was *ambition* in deſpair.
Old Rome conſulted birds; Lorenzo! thou,
With more ſucceſs, the flight of *hope* ſurvey;
Of reſtleſs hope, for ever on the wing.
High-perch'd o'er every thought that falcon ſits,
To fly at all that riſes in her ſight;
And, never ſtooping, but to mount again
Next moment, ſhe betrays her aim's miſtake,
And owns her quarry lodg'd beyond the grave.
There ſhould it fail us (it muſt fail us there,
If *being* fails) more mournful riddles riſe,
And *virtue* vies with *hope* in myſtery.
Why *virtue?* Where its praiſe, its being, fled?
Virtue is true ſelf-intereſt purſued:
What true ſelf-intereſt of *quite*-mortal man?
To cloſe with all that makes him happy *here*.

If vice (as ſometimes) is our friend on earth,
Then vice is virtue; 'tis our *ſovereign* good.
In *ſelf-applauſe* is virtue's golden prize;
No ſelf-applauſe attends it on *thy* ſcheme:
Whence ſelf-applauſe? From conſcience of the right.
And what is right, but means of happineſs?
No means of happineſs when *virtue* yields;
That baſis failing, falls the building too,
And lays in ruin every *virtuous joy*.
The rigid guardian of a blameleſs heart,
So long rever'd, ſo long reputed wiſe,
Is weak; with rank knight-errantries o'er-run.
Why beats thy boſom with illuſtrious dreams
Of ſelf-expoſure, laudable, and great?
Of gallant enterprize, and glorious death?
Die for thy country?—Thou romantic fool!
Seize, ſeize the plank thyſelf, and let her ſink:
Thy *country!* what to Thee?—The *Godhead*, what?
(I ſpeak with awe!) though He ſhould bid thee bleed?
If, with thy blood, thy *final* hope is ſpilt,
Nor can Omnipotence reward the blow,
Be deaf; preſerve thy being; diſobey.
Nor is it diſobedience: know, Lorenzo!
Whate'er th' Almighty's ſubſequent command,
His firſt command is *this*:—"Man, love thyſelf."
In this alone, free-agents are *not* free.
Exiſtence is the baſis, bliſs the prize;
If *virtue* coſts exiſtence, 'tis a crime;
Bold violation of our law *ſupreme*,
Black ſuicide; though nations, which conſult

Their gain, at thy expence, reſound applauſe.
Since *virtue's* recompence is doubtful, *here*,
If man dies wholly, well may we demand,
Why is man *ſuffer'd* to be good in vain?
Why to be good in vain, is man *injoin'd?*
Why to be good in vain, is man *betray'd?*
Betray'd by traitors lodg'd in his own breaſt,
By ſweet complacencies from virtue felt?
Why whiſpers *nature* lyes on virtue's part?
Or if blind *inſtinct* (which aſſumes the name
Of ſacred conſcience) plays the fool in man,
Why *reaſon* made accomplice in the cheat?
Why are the *wiſeſt* loudeſt in her praiſe?
Can man by *reaſon's* beam be led aſtray?
Or, at his peril, *imitate his God?*
Since virtue *ſometimes* ruins us on earth,
Or *both* are true; or man ſurvives the grave.
Or man ſurvives the grave; or own, Lorenzo,
Thy boaſt ſupreme, a wild abſurdity.
Dauntleſs thy ſpirit; cowards are thy ſcorn.
Grant man *immortal*, and thy ſcorn is juſt.
The man *immortal*, rationally brave,
Dares ruſh on death—becauſe he cannot die.
But if man loſes All, when life is loſt,
He lives a coward, or a fool expires.
A *daring* infidel (and ſuch there are,
From pride, example, lucre, rage, revenge,
Or pure *heroical* defect of thought),
Of all earth's madmen, moſt deſerves a chain.
When to the grave we follow the renown'd

For valour, virtue, ſcience, all we love,
And all we praiſe; for *worth*, whoſe noon-tide beam,
Enabling us to think in higher ſtyle,
Mends our ideas of ethereal powers;
Dream we, that luſtre of the *moral* world
Goes out in ſtench, and rottenneſs the cloſe?
Why was he wiſe to *know*, and warm to *praiſe*,
And ſtrenuous to *tranſcribe*, in human life,
The Mind Almighty? Could it be, that fate,
Juſt when the lineaments began to ſhine,
And dawn the Deity, ſhould ſnatch the draught,
With night eternal blot it out, and give
The ſkies alarm, leſt *angels* too might die?
If human ſouls, why not angelic too
Extinguiſh'd? and a *ſolitary* God,
O'er ghaſtly ruin, frowning from his throne?
Shall we this moment gaze on God in man?
The next, loſe man for ever in the duſt?
From duſt we diſengage, or man *miſtakes*;
And there, where leaſt his judgment fears a flaw,
Wiſdom and *worth* how boldly he commends!
Wiſdom and *worth* are ſacred names; rever'd,
Where not embrac'd; applauded! deify'd!
Why not *compaſſion'd* too? If ſpirits die,
Both are calamities, *inflicted* both,
To make us but more wretched: *Wiſdom's* eye
Acute, for what? To ſpy more miſeries;
And *worth*, *ſo* recompens'd, new-points their ſtings.
Or man ſurmounts the grave, or gain is loſs,
And worth exalted *humbles* us the more.

Thou

wilt not patronize a ſcheme that makes
ſt and *vice*, the refuge of mankind.
virtue, then, no joys?"—Yes, joys *dear-bought*.
ıe'er ſo long, in this imperfect ſtate,
and vice are at eternal war.
's a combat; and who fights for nought?
precarious, or for ſmall reward?
'irtue's *ſelf-reward* ſo loud reſound,
l take degrees *angelic* here below,
irtue, while they compliment, betray,
ble motives, and unfaithful guards.
:own, th' *unfading* crown, her ſoul inſpires:
'hat, and That alone, can countervail
ody's treacheries, and the *world's* aſſaults:
rth's poor pay our famiſh'd virtue dies.
inconteſtable! In ſpite of all
le has preach'd, or a Voltaire believ'd,
nan the more we dive, the more we ſee
n's ſignet ſtamping an *immortal* make.
:o the bottom of his ſoul, the baſe
ining all; what find we? *Knowledge*, *Love*.
ght and heat, eſſential to the ſun,
to the ſoul. And *why*, if ſouls expire?
little lovely *here*? How little known?
knowledge we dig up with endleſs toil;
love unfeign'd may purchaſe perfect hate.
ſtarv'd, on earth, our *angel* appetites;
: *brutal* are indulg'd their fulſome fill?
then capacities *divine* conferr'd,
mock-diadem, in ſavage ſport,

Rank

Rank inſult of our pompous *poverty*,
Which reaps but pain, from ſeeming claims ſo fair?
In future age lies no redreſs? And ſhuts
Eternity the door on our complaint?
If ſo, for what ſtrange ends were mortals made!
The worſt to *wallow*, and the beſt to *weep*;
The man who merits moſt, muſt moſt complain:
Can we conceive a diſregard in heaven,
What the worſt *perpetrate*, or beſt *endure*?
This cannot be. To *love*, and *know*, in man
Is boundleſs appetite, and boundleſs power;
And theſe demonſtrate boundleſs objects too.
Objects, powers, appetites, heaven ſuits in All;
Nor, *nature* through, e'er violates this ſweet,
Eternal concord, on her tuneful ſtring.
Is *man* the ſole exception from her laws?
Eternity ſtruck off from human hope,
(I ſpeak with truth, but veneration too)
Man is a monſter, the reproach of heaven,
A ſtain, a dark impenetrable cloud
On nature's beauteous aſpect; and deforms,
(Amazing blot!) deforms her with her *lord*.
If ſuch is man's allotment, *what* is heaven?
Or own the ſoul *immortal*, or blaſpheme.
Or own the ſoul immortal, or invert
All *order*. Go, mock-majeſty! go, man!
And bow to thy ſuperiors of the ſtall;
Through every ſcene of *ſenſe* ſuperior far:
They graze the turf untill'd; they drink the ſtream
Unbrew'd, and ever full, and un-embitter'd

With

With doubts, fears, fruitleſs hopes, regrets, deſpairs;
Mankind's peculiar! *reaſon's* precious dower!
No foreign clime *they* ranſack for their robes;
Nor brothers cite to the litigious bar;
Their good is good intire, unmixt, unmarr'd;
They find a paradiſe in every field,
On boughs *forbidden* where no curſes hang:
Their *ill* no more than ſtrikes the ſenſe; unſtretcht
By previous dread, or murmur in the rear:
When the *worſt* comes, it comes unfear'd; one ſtroke
Begins, and ends, their woe: they die but *once*;
Bleſt, incommunicable privilege! for which
Proud man, who rules the globe, and reads the ſtars,
Philoſopher, or *hero*, ſighs in vain.
Account for this prerogative in brutes.
No day, no glimpſe of day, to ſolve the knot,
But what beams on it from *eternity*.
O ſole, and ſweet ſolution! That unties
The difficult, and ſoftens the ſevere;
The cloud on *nature's* beauteous face diſpels;
Reſtores bright *order*; caſts the brute beneath;
And re-inthrones us in ſupremacy
Of joy, ev'n *here*: admit immortal life,
And virtue is *knight-errantry* no more;
Each *virtue* brings in hand a golden dower,
Far richer in reverſion: *Hope* exults;
And though much bitter in our cup is thrown,
Predominates, and gives the taſte of heaven.
O wherefore is the Deity ſo kind?
A ſtoniſhing beyond aſtoniſhment!

Heaven our reward—for heaven enjoy'd *below*.
Still unſubdued thy ſtubborn *heart* ?—For *there*
The traitor lurks who doubts the truth I ſing.
Reaſon is guiltleſs; *will* alone rebels.
What, in that ſtubborn heart, if I ſhould find
New, unexpected witneſſes againſt thee ?
Ambition, *pleaſure*, and the *love of gain* !
Canſt thou ſuſpect, that *theſe*, which make the ſoul
The *ſlave* of earth, ſhould own her *heir* of heaven ?
Canſt thou ſuſpect what makes us *diſbelieve*
Our immortality, ſhould prove it *ſure* ?
Firſt, then, *ambition* ſummon to the bar.
Ambition's *ſhame*, *extravagance*, *diſguſt*,
And *inextinguiſhable nature*, ſpeak.
Each much *depoſes*; hear them in their turn.
Thy ſoul, how paſſionately fond of *fame* !
How anxious, that fond paſſion to conceal !
We bluſh, detected in deſigns on praiſe,
Though for beſt deeds, and from the beſt of men;
And why ? Becauſe *immortal*. Art divine
Has made the body tutor to the ſoul;
Heaven kindly gives our blood a *moral* flow;
Bids it aſcend the glowing cheek, and there
Upbraid that little heart's inglorious aim,
Which ſtoops to court a character from man;
While o'er us in tremendous judgment ſit
Far more than man, with *endleſs* praiſe, and blame.
Ambition's *boundleſs appetite* out-ſpeaks
The verdict of its *ſhame*. When ſouls take fire
At high preſumptions of their own deſert,

One age is poor applauſe; the mighty ſhout,
The thunder by the living *few* begun,
Late time muſt echo; worlds unborn, reſound.
We wiſh our names *eternally* to live:
Wild dream, which ne'er had haunted human thought,
Had not our natures been *eternal* too.
Inſtinct points out an intereſt in hereafter;
But our blind *reaſon* ſees not *where* it lies;
Or, ſeeing, gives the ſubſtance for the ſhade.
Fame is the ſhade of immortality,
And in itſelf a ſhadow. Soon as caught,
Contemn'd; it ſhrinks to nothing in the graſp.
Conſult th' ambitious, 'tis ambition's cure.
"And is This all?" cry'd Cæſar at his height,
Diſguſted. This *third* proof ambition brings
Of immortality. The firſt in fame,
Obſerve him near, your envy will abate:
Sham'd at the diſproportion vaſt, between
The paſſion and the purchaſe, he will ſigh
At *ſuch* ſucceſs, and bluſh at his renown.
And why? Becauſe far richer prize invites
His heart; far more illuſtrious glory calls;
It calls in whiſpers, yet the deafeſt hear.
And can ambition a *fourth* proof ſupply?
It can, and ſtronger than the former three;
Yet quite o'er-look'd by ſome *reputed* wiſe.
Though diſappointments in ambition *pain*,
And though ſucceſs *diſguſts*; yet ſtill, Lorenzo!
In vain we ſtrive to pluck it from our hearts;
By nature planted for the nobleſt ends.

Abſurd the fam'd advice to Pyrrhus given,
More prais'd, than ponder'd; ſpecious, but unſound;
Sooner that hero's *ſword* the world had quell'd,
Than *reaſon*, his ambition. Man *muſt* ſoar,
An obſtinate activity within,
An inſuppreſſive ſpring, will toſs him up
In ſpite of *fortune's* load. Not kings alone,
Each villager has his ambition too;
No *Sultan* prouder than his fetter'd ſlave:
Slaves build their little Babylons of ſtraw,
Echo the proud Aſſyrian in their hearts,
And cry,—"Behold the wonders of my might!"
And why? Becauſe *immortal* as their lord;
And ſouls immortal muſt for ever heave
At ſomething great; the glitter, or the gold;
The praiſe of mortals, or the praiſe of heaven.
Nor abſolutely vain is *human* praiſe,
When human is ſupported by *divine*.
I 'll introduce Lorenzo to Himſelf;
Pleaſure and *pride* (bad maſters!) ſhare our hearts,
As love of *pleaſure* is ordain'd to guard
And feed our bodies, and extend our race;
The love of *praiſe* is planted to protect,
And propagate the glories of the mind.
What is it, but the *love of praiſe*, inſpires,
Matures, refines, embelliſhes, exalts,
Earth's happineſs? From *that*, the delicate,
The grand, the marvellous, of *civil* life,
Want and *convenience*, under-workers, lay
The baſis, on which *love of glory* builds.

Nor

Nor is *thy* life, O *virtue!* leſs in debt
To praiſe, thy ſecret ſtimulating friend.
Were men not *proud*, what merit ſhould we miſs!
Pride made the virtues of the pagan world.
Praiſe is the ſalt that ſeaſons *right* to man,
And whets his appetite for *moral* good.
Thirſt of applauſe is virtue's *ſecond* guard;
Reaſon, her firſt; but reaſon wants an aid;
Our *private* reaſon is a flatterer;
Thirſt of applauſe calls *public* judgment in,
To poiſe our own, to keep an even ſcale,
And give endanger'd virtue fairer play.
Here a *fifth* proof ariſes, ſtronger ſtill:
Why this ſo nice conſtruction of our hearts?
Theſe delicate moralities of *ſenſe*;
This *conſtitutional* reſerve of aid
To ſuccour virtue, when our *reaſon* fails;
If virtue, kept alive by care and toil,
And, oft, the mark of injuries on earth,
When labour'd to maturity (its bill
Of diſciplines, and pains, unpaid) muſt die?
Why freighted-rich, to daſh againſt a rock?
Were man to periſh when moſt fit to live,
O how miſ-ſpent were all theſe ſtratagems,
By ſkill divine invowen in our frame!
Where are heaven's holineſs and mercy fled?
Laughs heaven, at once, at *virtue*, and at *man*?
If not, why *that* diſcourag'd, *this* deſtroy'd?
Thus far *ambition*. What ſays *avarice*?
This *her* chief maxim, which has long been *Thine*:

"The wiſe and wealthy are the ſame,"—I grant it.
To ſtore up treaſure, with inceſſant toil,
This is man's province, *this* his higheſt praiſe.
To this great end keen *inſtinct* ſtings him on.
To guide that inſtinct, *reaſon!* is thy charge;
'Tis thine to tell us where *true* treaſure lies:
But, reaſon failing to diſcharge her truſt,
Or to the deaf diſcharging it in vain,
A blunder follows; and blind *induſtry*,
Gall'd by the ſpur, but ſtranger to the courſe,
(The courſe where ſtakes of more than gold are won)
O'er-loading, with the cares of diſtant age,
The jaded ſpirits of the *preſent* hour,
Provides for an *eternity* below.
"*Thou ſhalt not covet*," is a wiſe command;
But bounded to the wealth the ſun ſurveys:
Look farther, the command ſtands quite revers'd,
And *avarice* is a virtue moſt divine.
Is *faith* a refuge for our *happineſs?*
Moſt ſure: and is it not for *reaſon* too?
Nothing *this* world unriddles, but the *next*.
Whence inextinguiſhable thirſt of gain?
From inextinguiſhable life in man:
Man, if not meant, by *worth*, to reach the *ſkies*,
Had wanted wing to fly ſo far in *guilt*.
Sour grapes, I grant, *ambition*, *avarice*,
Yet ſtill their root is *immortality:*
Theſe its wild growths ſo bitter, and ſo baſe,
(Pain and reproach!) *religion* can reclaim,
Refine, exalt, throw down their poiſonous lee,

And

And make them ſparkle in the bowl of *bliſs*.
See, the *third witneſs* laughs at bliſs remote,
And falſely promiſes an Eden here:
Truth ſhe ſhall ſpeak for once, though prone to lye,
A common cheat, and *Pleaſure* is her name.
To pleaſure never was Lorenzo deaf;
Then hear her now, now *firſt* thy *real* friend.
Since nature made us not more fond than *proud*
Of happineſs (whence hypocrites in joy!
Makers of mirth! artificers of ſmiles!)
Why ſhould the joy moſt poignant *ſenſe* affords
Burn us with bluſhes, and rebuke our pride?—
Thoſe heaven-born bluſhes tell us man *deſcends*,
Ev'n in the zenith of his *earthly* bliſs:
Should *reaſon* take her infidel repoſe,
This honeſt *inſtinct* ſpeaks our lineage high;
This inſtinct calls on darkneſs to conceal
Our rapturous relation to the ſtalls.
Our *glory* covers us with noble *ſhame*,
And he that 's unconfounded, is *unmann'd*.
The man that bluſhes is not quite a *brute*.
Thus far with Thee, Lorenzo! will I cloſe,
Pleaſure is good, and man for pleaſure made;
But pleaſure full of glory, as of joy;
Pleaſure, which neither *bluſhes*, nor *expires*.
The witneſſes are heard; the cauſe is o'er;
Let *conſcience* file the ſentence in her court,
Dearer than *deeds* that half a realm convey:
Thus ſeal'd by *truth*, th' authentic record runs.

" Know, All; know, infidels,—unapt to know!
" 'Tis *immortality* your nature ſolves;
" 'Tis *immortality* decyphers man,
" And opens all the myſteries of his make.
" Without it, half his *inſtincts* are a riddle;
" Without it, all his *virtues* are a dream.
" His very *crimes* atteſt his dignity;
" His fateleſs thirſt of *pleaſure*, *gold*, and *fame*,
" Declares him born for bleſſings *infinite*:
" What leſs than infinite makes un-abſurd
" *Paſſions*, which *all* on earth but more inflames?
" Fierce paſſions, ſo miſ-meaſur'd to *this* ſcene,
" Stretch'd out, like eagles wings, beyond our neſt,
" Far, far beyond the worth of all below,
" For *earth* too large, preſage a nobler flight,
" And evidence our title to the *ſkies*."

Ye gentle theologues, of calmer kind!
Whoſe conſtitution dictates to your pen,
Who, cold yourſelves, think ardour comes from hell!
Think not our paſſions from *corruption* ſprung,
Though to corruption now they lend their wings;
That is their *miſtreſs*, not their *mother*. All
(And juſtly) *reaſon* deem divine: I ſee,
I feel a grandeur, in the *paſſions* too,
Which ſpeaks their high deſcent, and glorious end;
Which ſpeaks them rays of an eternal fire.
In Paradiſe itſelf they burnt as ſtrong,
Ere Adam fell; though wiſer in their aim,
Like the proud Eaſtern, ſtruck by providence,
What though our *paſſions* are run mad, and ſtoop

With

With low, terreſtrial appetite, to graze
On traſh, on toys, dethron'd from high deſire?
Yet ſtill, through their diſgrace, no feeble ray
Of greatneſs ſhines, and tells us, whence they fell:
But *theſe* (like that fall'n monarch when reclaim'd),
When *reaſon* moderates the rein aright,
Shall re-aſcend, remount their former ſphere,
Where once they ſoar'd illuſtrious; ere ſeduc'd
By wanton Eve's debauch, to ſtroll on earth,
And ſet the ſublunary world on fire.
But grant their phrenſy laſts; their phrenſy fails
To diſappoint *one* providential end,
For which heaven blew up ardour in our hearts:
Were *reaſon* ſilent, boundleſs *paſſion* ſpeaks
A future ſcene of boundleſs *objects* too,
And brings glad tidings of *eternal* day.
Eternal day! 'Tis that enlightens All;
And All, by that enlighten'd, proves it *ſure*.
Conſider man as an *immortal* being,
Intelligible All; and All is great;
A cryſtalline tranſparency prevails,
And ſtrikes full luſtre through the human ſphere:
Conſider man as *mortal*, All is dark,
And wretched; *reaſon* weeps at the ſurvey.
The learn'd Lorenzo cries, "And let her weep,
"Weak, *modern* reaſon: *Antient* times were wiſe.
"*Authority*, that venerable guide,
"Stands on my part; the fam'd Athenian porch
"(And who for wiſdom ſo renown'd as they?)
"Deny'd this immortality to man."

I grant it; but affirm, they *prov'd* it too.
A riddle this!—Have patience; I 'll explain.
What noble vanities, what moral flights,
Glittering through their romantic wiſdom's page,
Make us, at once, deſpiſe them, and admire?
Fable is flat to theſe high-ſeaſon'd fires;
They leave th' extravagance of ſong below.
" Fleſh ſhall not feel; or, feeling, ſhall enjoy
" The dagger or the rack; to them, alike
" A bed of roſes, or the burning bull."
In men exploding all beyond the grave,
Strange doctrine, This! As *doctrine*, it was ſtrange;
But not, as *prophecy*; for ſuch it prov'd,
And, to their own amazement, was fulfill'd:
They feign'd a firmneſs *Chriſtians* need not feign.
The *Chriſtian* truly triumph'd in the flame:
The *Stoic* ſaw, in double wonder loſt,
Wonder at Them, and wonder at Himſelf,
To find the bold adventures of his thought,
Not bold, and that he ſtrove to lye in vain.
Whence, then, thoſe thoughts? Thoſe towering thoughts, that flew
Such monſtrous heights?—From *inſtinct*, and from *pride*.
The glorious *inſtinct* of a deathleſs ſoul,
Confus'dly conſcious of her dignity,
Suggeſted truths they could not underſtand.
In *luſt's* dominion, and in *paſſion's* ſtorm,
Truth's ſyſtem broken, ſcatter'd fragments lay,
As light in chaos, glimmering through the gloom:
Smit with the pomp of lofty ſentiments,

Pleas'd

Pleas'd *pride* proclaim'd, what *reaſon* diſbeliev'd.
Pride, like the Delphic prieſteſs, with a ſwell,
Rav'd nonſenſe, deſtin'd to be *future* ſenſe,
When life *immortal*, in full day, ſhould ſhine;
And *death's dark ſhadows* fly the goſpel ſun.
They ſpoke, what nothing but *immortal* ſouls
Could ſpeak; and thus the truth they queſtion'd, prov'd.
Can then *abſurdities*, as well as *crimes*,
Speak man *immortal*? All things ſpeak him ſo.
Much has been urg'd: and doſt thou call for more?
Call; and with endleſs queſtions be diſtreſs'd,
All unreſolvable, if *earth* is all.
" Why life, a moment; infinite, deſire?
" Our wiſh, Eternity? Our home, the Grave?
" Heaven's *promiſe* dormant lies in human *hope*;
" Who *wiſhes* life immortal, proves it too.
" Why happineſs purſued, though never found?
" Man's thirſt of happineſs declares *It is*,
" (For nature never gravitates to nought);
" That thirſt unquench'd declares *It is not Here*.
" *My* Lucia, *Thy* Clariſſa, call to thought;
" Why *cordial friendſhip* riveted ſo deep,
" As hearts to pierce at firſt, at parting, rend,
" If friend, and friendſhip, vaniſh in an hour?
" Is not This torment in the maſk of joy?
" Why by *reflection* marr'd the joys of *ſenſe*?
" Why *paſt*, and *future*, preying on our hearts,
" And putting all our *preſent* joys to death?
" Why labours *reaſon*? *inſtinct* were as well;

" Inſtinct far better; what can *chuſe*, can *err*:
" O how *infallible* the thoughtleſs brute!
" 'Twere well his *Holineſs* were half as ſure.
" *Reaſon* with *inclination*, why at war?
" Why ſenſe of *guilt*? why *conſcience* up in arms?"
Conſcience of guilt, is prophecy of pain,
And boſom-council to decline the blow.
Reaſon with inclination ne'er had jarr'd,
If nothing future paid forbearance Here:
Thus on—Theſe, and a thouſand pleas uncall'd,
All *promiſe*, ſome *enſure*, a ſecond ſcene;
Which, were it *doubtful*, would be dearer far
Than all things elſe moſt *certain*; were it *falſe*,
What *truth* on earth ſo precious as the lye?
This world it gives us, let what will enſue;
This world it gives, in that high cordial, *hope*:
The future of the preſent is the ſoul:
How *this* life groans, when ſever'd from the *next!*
Poor mutilated wretch, that diſbelieves!
By dark diſtruſt his being cut in two,
In *both* parts periſhes; *life* void of joy,
Sad prelude of *Eternity* in pain!
Couldſt thou perſuade me, the next life could fail
Our ardent wiſhes; how ſhould I pour out
My bleeding heart in anguiſh, *new*, as deep!
Oh! with what thoughts, thy *hope*, and my *deſpair*,
Abhorr'd annihilation! blaſts the ſoul,
And wide extends the bounds of human woe!
Could I believe Lorenzo's ſyſtem true,
In *this* black channel would my ravings run.

" *Grief*

" *Grief* from the *future* borrow'd peace, ere while.
" The future *vaniſh'd!* and the preſent *pain'd!*
" Strange import of unprecedented ill!
" Fall, how profound! Like Lucifer's, the fall!
" Unequal fate! His fall, without his guilt!
" From where fond *hope* built her pavilion high,
" The gods among, hurl'd headlong, hurl'd at once
" To night! To *nothing*, darker ſtill than night!
" If 't was a *dream*, why wake me, my worſt Foe,
" Lorenzo! boaſtful of the name of Friend!
" O for deluſion! O for error ſtill!
" Could vengeance ſtrike much ſtronger than to plant
" A *thinking* being in a world like This,
" Not over-rich before, *now* beggar'd quite;
" More curſt than at the *fall?*—The ſun goes out!
" The thorns ſhoot up! What thorns in every thought!
" Why ſenſe of better? It imbitters worſe.
" Why ſenſe? why life? If but to ſigh, then ſink
" To what I was! *twice* nothing! and much woe!
" Woe, from heaven's bounties! woe from what was
" wont
" To flatter moſt, high *intellectual powers.*
" *Thought, virtue, knowledge!* bleſſings, by *thy* ſcheme,
" All poiſon'd into pains. Firſt, *knowledge*, once
" My ſoul's ambition, *now* her greateſt dread.
" To *know myſelf*, true wiſdom?—No, to ſhun
" That ſhocking ſcience, parent of deſpair!
" Avert thy mirror: if I ſee, I die.
" *Know my Creator?* Climb His bleſt abode
" By painful ſpeculation, pierce the veil,

" Dive

" Dive in His nature, read His attributes,
" And gaze in admiration—on a *foe*,
" Obtruding life, with-holding happineſs!
" From the full rivers that ſurround his throne,
" Not letting fall one drop of joy on man;
" Man gaſping for one drop, that he might ceaſe
" To curſe his birth, nor envy *reptiles* more!
" Ye ſable clouds! ye darkeſt ſhades of night!
" Hide *Him*, for ever hide Him, from my thought,
" Once all my comfort; ſource, and ſoul of joy!
" Now leagu'd with furies, and with * *Thee*, againſt me.
" *Know His atchievements?* Study His renown?
" Contemplate this amazing univerſe,
" Dropt from His hand, with miracles replete!
" For what? 'Mid miracles of nobler name,
" To find one miracle of *miſery?*
" To find the Being, which alone can *know*
" And *praiſe* His works, a blemiſh on His praiſe?
" Through nature's ample range, in thought, to ſtroll.
" And ſtart at *man*, the ſingle mourner There,
" Breathing high hope! chain'd down to pangs, and
" death?
" Knowing is ſuffering: and ſhall *virtue* ſhare
" The ſigh of *knowledge?*—Virtue ſhares the ſigh.
" By ſtraining up the ſteep of *excellent*,
" By battles fought, and, from temptation, won,
" What gain ſhe, but the pang of ſeeing worth,
" *Angelic* worth, ſoon ſhuffled in the dark
" With every vice, and ſwept to *brutal* duſt?

" Merit

* Lorenzo.

" Merit is madneſs; virtue is a crime;
" A crime to *reaſon*, if it coſts us pain
" *Unpaid*: what pain, amidſt a thouſand more,
" To think the moſt *abandon'd*, after days
" Of triumph o'er their betters, find in death
" As *ſoft* a pillow, nor make *fouler* clay!
" *Duty! Religion!*—Theſe, our duty done,
" Imply reward. *Religion* is miſtake.
" *Duty!*—There 's none, but to repel the cheat.
" Ye cheats! away! ye daughters of my pride!
" Who feign yourſelves the favourites of the ſkies:
" Ye towering hopes! abortive energies!
" That toſs, and ſtruggle, in my *lying* breaſt,
" To ſcale the ſkies, and build preſumptions There,
" As I were heir of an *Eternity*.
" Vain, vain ambitions! trouble me no more.
" Why travel far in queſt of ſure defeat?
" As bounded as my being, be my wiſh.
" All is inverted, *wiſdom* is a fool.
" *Senſe!* take the rein; blind *paſſion!* drive us on;
" And, *ignorance!* befriend us on our way;
" Ye *new*, but *trueſt* patrons of our peace!
" Yes; give the *pulſe* full empire; live the *brute*,
" Since, as the brute, we die. The *ſum* of man,
" Of Godlike man! to *revel*, and to *rot*.
" But not on equal terms with *other* brutes:
" *Their* revels a more poignant reliſh yield,
" And ſafer too; *they* never poiſons chuſe.
" *Inſtinct*, than *reaſon*, makes more wholſome meals,
" And ſends all-marring murmur far away.

" For

" For *ſenſual* life *they* beſt philoſophize,
" *Theirs*, that *ſerene*, the *ſages* ſought in **vain**:
" 'Tis *man* alone expoſtulates with **heaven**;
" *His*, all the *power*, and all the *cauſe*, **to mourn.**
" Shall *human* eyes *alone* diſſolve in **tears**?
" And bleed, in anguiſh, none but *human* **hearts**?
" The wide-ſtretch'd realm of *intellectual* **woe**,
" Surpaſſing *ſenſual* far, is All our Own.
" In *life* ſo fatally diſtinguiſh'd, why
" Caſt in one lot, confounded, lump'd, **in *death*?**
" Ere yet in being, was mankind in **guilt**?
" Why thunder'd this peculiar *clauſe* againſt **us**,
" *All-mortal and All-wretched!*—Have the **ſkies**
" Reaſons of ſtate, their ſubjects may not ſcan,
" Nor *humbly* reaſon, when they *ſorely* ſigh?
" *All-mortal, and All-wretched!*—'Tis **too much**:
" Unparallel'd in nature: 'tis too much
" On being *unrequeſted* at Thy hands,
" Omnipotent! for I ſee nought but *power*.
" And why ſee That? Why *thought*? To toil, and **eat**,
" Then make our bed in darkneſs, needs **no thought.**
" What ſuperfluities are *reaſoning* ſouls!
" Oh give Eternity! or Thought deſtroy.
" But without thought our curſe were **half unfelt**;
" Its blunted edge would ſpare the throbbing **heart**;
" And, *therefore*, 'tis beſtow'd, I thank thee, *Reaſon!*
" For aiding *life's* too ſmall calamities,
" And giving being to the dread of *death*.
" Such are thy bounties!—Was it then **too much**

' For *me*, to treſpaſs on the brutal rights?
' Too much for *heaven* to make one emmet more? 770
' Too much for *chaos* to permit my maſs
' A longer ſtay with eſſences unwrought,
' Unfaſhion'd, *untormented* into *man*?
' Wretched *preferment* to this round of pains!
' Wretched capacity of phrenzy, *thought!* 775
' Wretched capacity of dying, *life!*
' *Life*, *thought*, *worth*, *wiſdom*, All (O foul revolt!)
' *Once* friends to peace, gone over to the foe.
" *Death*, then, has chang'd his nature too: O death!
' Come to my boſom, thou beſt gift of heaven! 780
' Beſt friend of man! ſince man is man no more.
" Why in this thorny *wilderneſs* ſo long,
" Since there 's no *promis'd land's* ambroſial bower,
" To pay me with its honey for my ſtings?
" If needful to the ſelfiſh ſchemes of heaven 785
" To ſting us ſore, why *mock't* our miſery?
" Why this ſo ſumptuous inſult o'er our heads?
" Why this illuſtrious canopy diſplay'd?
" Why ſo magnificently lodg'd *deſpair*?
" At ſtated periods, ſure-returning, roll 790
" Theſe *glorious orbs*, that mortals may compute
" Their length of labours, and of pains; nor loſe
" Their miſery's full meaſure?—Smiles with flowers,
" And fruits, promiſcuous, ever-teeming *earth*,
" That man may languiſh in *luxurious* ſcenes, 795
" And in an Eden mourn his wither'd joys?
" Claim earth and ſkies man's admiration, due
" For *ſuch* delights! Bleſt *animals*! too wiſe

" To

Charm *riches?* Why chuſe beggary in the grave,
Of every hope a bankrupt! and for ever?
Ambition, pleaſure, avarice, perſuade thee
To make that world of glory, rapture, wealth,
They * lately *prov'd,* the ſoul's ſupreme deſire.
What art thou made of? Rather, how Unmade
Great *nature's* maſter-appetite deſtroy'd!
Is endleſs life, and happineſs, deſpis'd?
Or both wiſh'd, *here,* where neither can be found!
Such man's perverſe, eternal war with heaven!
Dar'ſt thou perſiſt? And is there nought on earth,
But a long train of tranſitory forms,
Riſing, and breaking, millions in an hour?
Bubbles of fantaſtic deity, blown up
In ſport, and then in cruelty deſtroy'd?
Oh! for what crime, unmerciful Lorenzo!
Deſtroys thy ſcheme the *whole* of human race?
Kind is fell Lucifer, compar'd to Thee:
Oh! ſpare this *waſte* of being half-divine;
And vindicate th' *œconomy* of heaven.
Heaven is all love; all joy in giving joy:
It never had created, but to *bleſs:*
And ſhall it, then, ſtrike off the liſt of life,
A being bleſt, or worthy *ſo* to be?
Heaven ſtarts at an *annihilating* God.
Is That, all *nature* ſtarts at, thy deſire?
Art ſuch a clod to wiſh thyſelf *all* clay?
What is that dreadful wiſh?—The dying groan
Of *nature,* murder'd by the blackeſt guilt.

* In Night VI.

What deadly poiſon has thy nature drunk;
To nature undebauch'd no ſhock ſo great;
Nature's *firſt* wiſh is *endleſs happineſs*;
Annihilation is an after-thought,
A monſtrous wiſh, unborn till virtue dies.
And, oh! what depth of horror lies inclos'd!
For non-exiſtence no man ever wiſh'd,
But, firſt, he wiſh'd the Deity deſtroy'd.
If ſo; what words are dark enough to draw
Thy picture true? The darkeſt are too fair.
Beneath what baleful planet, in what hour
Of deſperation, by what fury's aid,
In what infernal poſture of the ſoul,
All hell invited, and all hell in joy
At ſuch a birth, a birth ſo near of kin,
Did thy foul *fancy* whelp ſo black a ſcheme
Of *hopes* abortive, *faculties* half-blown,
And *deities begun*, reduc'd to duſt?
There 's nought (thou ſay'ſt) but one eternal flux
Of feeble eſſences, tumultuous driven
Through *time's* rough billows into *night's* abyſs.
Say, in this rapid *tide* of human ruin,
Is there no *rock*, on which man's toſſing thought
Can reſt from terror, dare his fate ſurvey,
And boldly think it *ſomething* to be born?
Amid ſuch hourly wrecks of being fair,
Is there no central, all-ſuſtaining *baſe*,
All-realizing, all-connecting *power*,
Which, as it call'd forth all things, can *recall*,
And force *deſtruction* to refund her ſpoil?

Command the grave reſtore her taken prey?
Bid death's dark vale its human harveſt yield,
And *earth*, and *ocean*, pay their debt of man,
True to the grand depoſit truſted *there?*
Is there no *potentate*, whoſe out-ſtretch'd arm,
When ripening time calls forth th' appointed hour,
Pluck'd from foul *devaſtation's* famiſh'd maw,
Binds *preſent*, *paſt*, and *future*, to his throne?
His throne, how glorious, thus divinely grac'd,
By germinating beings cluſtering round!
A garland worthy the divinity!
A throne, by heaven's omnipotence *in ſmiles*,
Built (like a *pharos* towering in the waves)
Amidſt immenſe effuſions of his love!
An ocean of *communicated* bliſs!
An all-prolific, all preſerving God!
This were a God indeed.—And ſuch *is* man,
As here preſum'd: he riſes from his fall.
Think'ſt thou Omnipotence a naked root,
Each bloſſom fair of Deity deſtroy'd?
Nothing is dead; nay, nothing ſleeps; each ſoul,
That ever animated human clay,
Now wakes; is on the wing: and where, O where,
Will the ſwarm ſettle?—When the *trumpet's* call,
As ſounding braſs, collects us, round heaven's throne
Conglob'd, we baſk in everlaſting day,
(Paternal ſplendor!) and adhere for ever.
Had not the ſoul this *outlet* to the ſkies,
In this vaſt veſſel of the univerſe,

He

How ſhould we gaſp, as in an empty void!
How in the pangs of famiſh'd *hope* expire!
How bright *my* proſpect ſhines! how gloomy, *thine!*
A trembling world! and a devouring God!
Earth, but the Shambles of Omnipotence!
Heaven's face all ſtain'd with cauſeleſs maſſacres
Of countleſs millions, born to feel the pang
Of being *loſt*. Lorenzo! can it be?
This bids us ſhudder at the thoughts of *life*.
Who would be born to ſuch a phantom world,
Where nought ſubſtantial but our miſery?
Where joy (if joy) but heightens our diſtreſs,
So ſoon to periſh, and revive no more?
The greater *ſuch* a joy, the *more* it pains.
A world, ſo far from *great* (and yet how great
It ſhines to thee!) there 's nothing *real* in it;
Being, a ſhadow; *conſciouſneſs*, a dream:
A dream, how dreadful! Univerſal blank
Before it, and behind! Poor man, a ſpark
From non-exiſtence ſtruck by wrath divine,
Glittering a moment, nor that moment ſure,
Midſt upper, nether, and ſurrounding *night*,
His ſad, ſure, ſudden, and eternal tomb!
Lorenzo! doſt thou *feel* theſe arguments?
Or is there nought but *vengeance* can be felt?
How haſt thou dar'd the deity dethrone?
How dar'd *indict* Him of a world like this?
If *ſuch* the world, creation was a crime;
For what is crime but cauſe of miſery?
Retract, blaſphemer! and unriddle *this*,

Of endleſs arguments *above*, *below*,
Without us, and *within*, the ſhort reſult—
" *If man 's immortal, there 's a God in heaven.*"
But wherefore ſuch redundancy? ſuch waſte
Of argument? One ſets *my* ſoul at reſt!
One obvious, and at hand, and, oh!—at *heart*.
So juſt the ſkies, Philander's life ſo pain'd,
His heart ſo pure; *that*, or *ſucceeding* ſcenes
Have palms to give, or ne'er had he been born.
" *What an old tale is this!*" Lorenzo cries.—
I grant this argument is old; but truth
No years impair; and had not this been true,
Thou never hadſt deſpis'd it for its age.
Truth is immortal as thy ſoul; and *fable*
As fleeting as thy joys: be wiſe, nor make
Heaven's higheſt bleſſing, vengeance; O be wiſe!
Nor make a curſe of *immortality*.
Say, know'ſt thou what *it* is, or what *thou* art?
Know'ſt thou th' *importance* of a ſoul immortal?
Behold this midnight glory: worlds on worlds!
Amazing pomp! redouble this amaze;
Ten thouſand add; add twice ten thouſand more;
Then weigh the whole; *one* ſoul outweighs them all;
And calls th' aſtoniſhing magnificence
Of *unintelligent* creation *poor*.
For this, believe not *me*; no *man* believe;
Truſt not in words, but deeds; and deeds no leſs
Than thoſe of the Supreme; nor His, a few;
Conſult them *all*; conſulted, all proclaim
Thy ſoul's importance: tremble at thyſelf;

For

For whom *Omnipotence* has wak'd ſo long:
Has wak'd, and work'd, for ages; from the birth
Of nature to this *unbelieving* hour.
In this ſmall province of His vaſt domain
(All *nature* bow, while I pronounce His Name!)
What has God done, and not for *this* ſole end,
To reſcue ſouls from death? The *ſoul's high price*
Is writ in all the conduct of the ſkies.
The *ſoul's high price* is the *Creation's Key*.
Unlocks its myſteries, and naked lays
The genuine cauſe of every deed divine:
That is the *chain of ages*, which maintains
Their obvious correſpondence, and unites
Moſt diſtant periods in one bleſt deſign:
That is the *mighty hinge*, on which have turn'd
All revolutions, whether we regard
The *natural*, *civil*, or *religious*, world;
The former two but ſervants to the third:
To that there duty done, they both expire,
Their *maſs* new-caſt, forgot their *deeds renown'd*;
And angels aſk, "*Where once they ſhone ſo fair?*"
To lift us from this abject, to ſublime;
This flux, to permanent; this dark, to day;
This foul, to pure; this turbid, to ſerene;
This mean, to mighty!—for *this* glorious end
Th' Almighty, riſing, his long ſabbath broke!
The world was made; was ruin'd; was reſtor'd;
Laws from the ſkies were publiſh'd; were repeal'd;
On *earth* kings, kingdoms, roſe; kings, kingdoms, fell;
Fam'd ſages lighted up the *pagan* world;

Prophets from Sion darted a keen glance
Through diſtant age; ſaints travel'd; martyrs bled;
By wonders ſacred nature ſtood control'd;
The living were tranſlated; dead were rais'd;
Angels, and *more* than angels, came from heaven;
And, oh! for *this*, deſcended lower ſtill;
Guilt was hell's gloom; aſtoniſh'd at his gueſt,
For one ſhort moment Lucifer ador'd:
Lorenzo! and wilt thou do leſs?—For *this*,
That *hallow'd page*, fools ſcoff at, was inſpir'd,
Of all theſe truths thrice venerable code!
Deiſts! perform your quarantine; and then
Fall proſtrate, ere you touch it, leſt you die.
Nor leſs intenſely bent *infernal* powers
To mar, than thoſe of *light*, *this* end to gain.
O what a ſcene is here!—Lorenzo! wake!
Riſe to the thought; exert, expand thy ſoul
To take the vaſt idea: it denies
All *elſe* the name of great. Two warring worlds!
Not Europe againſt Afric; warring worlds!
Of *more* than mortal! mounted on the wing!
On ardent wings of energy and zeal,
High-hovering o'er this little brand of ſtrife!
This ſublunary ball—But ſtrife, for what?
In their own cauſe conflicting? No; in *thine*,
In *man's*. His *ſingle* intereſt blows the flame;
His the ſole ſtake; his fate the trumpet ſounds,
Which kindles war immortal. How it burns!
Tumultuous ſwarms of deities in arms!
Force, force oppoſing, till the waves run high,

And

And tempeſt nature's univerſal ſphere.
Such oppoſites eternal, ſtedfaſt, ſtern,
Such foes implacable, are *good*, and *ill*;
Yet man, vain man, would mediate peace between them.
Think not this fiction, "*There was war in heaven.*"
From heaven's high cryſtal mountain, where it hung,
Th' Almighty's out-ſtretch'd arm took down his bow,
And ſhot his indignation at the *deep*:
Re-thunder'd *hell*, and darted all her fires.
And ſeems the ſtake of little moment ſtill?
And ſlumbers *man*, who ſingly caus'd the ſtorm?
He ſleeps.—And art thou ſhock'd at *myſteries?*
The greateſt, Thou. How dreadful to reflect,
What ardour, care, and counſel *mortals* cauſe
In breaſts divine! how little in their own!
Where-e'er I turn, how new *proofs* pour upon me!
How happily this wondrous view ſupports
My former argument! How ſtrongly *ſtrikes*
Immortal life's full demonſtration, *here!*
Why this exertion? Why this ſtrange regard
From heaven's Omnipotent indulg'd to man?—
Becauſe, in man, the glorious dreadful power,
Extremely to be pain'd, or bleſt, for *ever*.
Duration gives importance; ſwells the price.
An angel, if a creature of a day,
What would he be? A trifle of no weight;
Or ſtand, or fall; no matter which; he 's gone.
Becauſe Immortal, therefore is indulg'd
This ſtrange regard of deities to duſt.
Hence heaven looks down on earth with all her eyes:

Hence, the ſoul's mighty moment in her ſight:
Hence, every ſoul has partiſans above,
And every thought a critic in the ſkies:
Hence, clay, vile clay! has angels for its guard,
And every guard a paſſion for his charge:
Hence, from all age, the cabinet divine
Has held high counſel o'er the fate of man.
Nor have the clouds thoſe gracious counſels hid;
Angels undrew the curtain of the throne,
And Providence came forth to meet mankind:
In various modes of emphaſis and awe,
He ſpoke his will, and trembling *nature* heard;
He ſpoke it loud, in thunder and in ſtorm.
Witneſs, thou Sinai! whoſe cloud-cover'd height,
And ſhaken baſis, own'd the preſent God;
Witneſs, ye *billows!* whoſe returning tide,
Breaking the chain that faſten'd it in air,
Swept Egypt, and her menaces, to hell:
Witneſs, ye *flames!* th' Aſſyrian tyrant blew
To ſevenfold rage, as impotent, as ſtrong:
And thou, *earth!* witneſs, whoſe expanding jaws
Clos'd o'er * *preſumption's* ſacrilegious ſons:
Has not each element, in turn, ſubſcrib'd
The *ſoul's high price*, and ſworn it to the wiſe?
Has not flame, ocean, æther, earthquake, ſtrove
To ſtrike *this truth* through adamantine man?
If not all adamant, Lorenzo! hear;
All is deluſion; *nature* is wrapt up,
In tenfold night, from *reaſon's* keeneſt eye;

There

* Korah, &c.

There 's no conſiſtence, meaning, plan, or end,
In all beneath the ſun, in all above,
(As far as man can penetrate), or heaven.
Is an immenſe, ineſtimable prize;
Or all is Nothing, or that prize is all.—
And ſhall each *toy* be ſtill a match for heaven,
And full equivalent for groans below?
Who would not give a trifle to *prevent*
What he would give a thouſand worlds to *cure*?
Lorenzo! thou haſt ſeen (if thine to ſee)
All *nature*, and her God (by nature's *courſe*,
And nature's courſe *control'd*) declare for me:
The ſkies above proclaim, "*immortal* man!"
And, "man *immortal!*" all below reſounds.
The world 's a ſyſtem of theology,
Read by the greateſt ſtrangers to the ſchools;
If *boneſt*, learn'd; and *ſages* o'er a plough.
Is not, Lorenzo! then, impos'd on thee
This hard alternative; or, to renounce
Thy *reaſon*, or thy *ſenſe*; or, to *believe*?
What then is *unbelief*? 'Tis an exploit;
A ſtrenuous enterprize: to gain it, man.
Muſt burſt through every bar of common ſenſe,
Of common ſhame, magnanimouſly wrong;
And what rewards the ſturdy combatant?
His prize, *repentance*; *infamy*, his crown.
But wherefore, *infamy*?—For want of *faith*,
Down the ſteep precipice of *wrong* he ſlides;
There 's nothing to ſupport him in the *right*.
Faith in the future wanting is at leaſt

In

In *embryo*, every weakneſs, every guilt;
And ſtrong temptation ripens it to *birth*.
If *this* life's gain invites him to the deed,
Why not his country ſold, his father ſlain?
'Tis virtue to purſue our good ſupreme;
And his ſupreme, his *only* good is *here*.
Ambition, *avarice*, by the wiſe diſdain'd,
Is perfect *wiſdom*, while mankind are *fools*,
And think a turf, or tomb-ſtone, covers all:
Theſe find employment, and provide for *ſenſe*
A richer paſture, and a larger range;
And *ſenſe* by right divine aſcends the throne,
When *virtue's* prize and proſpect are no more;
Virtue no more we think the will of heaven.
Would heaven quite *beggar* virtue, if belov'd?
"Has *virtue* charms?"—I grant her heavenly fair;
But if unportion'd, all will *intereſt* wed;
Though *that* our admiration, *this* our choice.
The virtues grow on *immortality*;
That root deſtroy'd, they wither and expire.
A Deity believ'd, will nought avail;
Rewards and *puniſhments* make God ador'd;
And *hopes* and *fears* give *conſcience* all her power.
As in the dying parent dies the child,
Virtue, with *immortality*, expires.
Who tells me he denies his ſoul immortal,
Whate'er his boaſt, has told me, *He 's a knave*.
His *duty* 'tis, to love himſelf *alone*;
Nor care though mankind periſh, if he ſmiles.
Who thinks ere long the man ſhall *wholly* die,

Is dead already; nought but *brute* ſurvives.
And are there ſuch?—Such candidates there are
For *more* than death; for utter loſs of being,
Being, the baſis of the Deity!
Aſk you the *cauſe?*—The cauſe they will not tell:
Nor *need* they: Oh the ſorceries of *ſenſe!*
They work this transformation on the ſoul,
Diſmount her, like the ſerpent at the fall,
Diſmount her from her native wing (which ſoar'd
Ere-while ethereal heights), and throw her down,
To lick the duſt, and *crawl* in ſuch a thought.
Is it in words to paint you? O ye fall'n!
Fall'n from the wings of *reaſon*, and of *hope!*
Erect in ſtature, prone in appetite!
Patrons of pleaſure, poſting into pain!
Lovers of argument, averſe to ſenſe!
Boaſters of liberty, faſt bound in chains!
Lords of the wide creation, and the ſhame!
More *ſenſeleſs* than th' *irrationals* you ſcorn!
More *baſe* than thoſe you rule! Than thoſe you pity,
Far more *undone!* O ye moſt infamous
Of beings, from ſuperior dignity!
Deepeſt in woe from means of boundleſs bliſs!
Ye curſt by bleſſings infinite! becauſe
Moſt highly favour'd, moſt profoundly loſt!
Ye motly maſs of *contradiction* ſtrong!
And are you, too, convinc'd, your ſouls fly off
In exhalation ſoft, and die in air,
From the full flood of evidence *againſt* you?
In the coarſe drudgeries and ſinks of *ſenſe*,

Your ſouls have quite worn out the make of heaven,
By vice new-caſt, and creatures of your own:
But though you can *deform*, you can't *deſtroy*;
To *curſe*, not *uncreate*, is all your power.
Lorenzo! this black brotherhood renounce;
Renounce St. Evremont, and read St. Paul.
Ere, rapt by miracle, by *reaſon* wing'd,
His mounting mind made long abode in heaven.
This is *freethinking*, unconfin'd to *parts*,
To ſend the ſoul, on curious travel bent,
Through all the provinces of human thought;
To dart her flight through the whole ſphere of man;
Of this vaſt univerſe to make the tour;
In each receſs of *ſpace*, and *time*, at home;
Familiar with their wonders; diving deep;
And, like a prince of boundleſs intereſts *there*,
Still moſt ambitious of the moſt remote;
To look on *truth* unbroken, and intire;
Truth in the *ſyſtem*, the full orb; where truths
By truths enlighten'd, and ſuſtain'd, afford
An arch-like, ſtrong foundation, to ſupport
Th' incumbent weight of abſolute, complete
Conviction; here, the more we preſs, we ſtand
More firm; who moſt *examine*, moſt *believe*.
Parts, like half-ſentences, confound; the *whole*
Conveys the ſenſe, and God is underſtood;
Who not in *fragments* writes to human race:
Read his *whole* volume, ſceptic! then reply.
This, *this*, is *thinking free*, a thought that graſps
Beyond a grain, and looks beyond an hour.

Turn

Turn up thine eye, ſurvey this midnight ſcene;
What are earth's kingdoms, to yon boundleſs orbs,
Of human ſouls, one day, the deſtin'd range?
And what yon boundleſs orbs, to godlike *man?*
Thoſe numerous worlds that throng the firmament,
And aſk more ſpace in heaven, can roll at large
In man's capacious thought, and ſtill leave room
For ampler orbs, for *new* creations, there.
Can *ſuch* a ſoul contract itſelf, to gripe
A point of no dimenſion, of no weight?
It can; it does: the *world* is ſuch a point:
And, of *that* point, how *ſmall* a part enſlaves!
How ſmall a part—of *nothing*, ſhall I ſay?
Why not?—*Friends*, our *chief* treaſure! how they drop!
Lucia, Narciſſa fair, Philander, gone!
The *grave*, like fabled Cerberus, has op'd
A triple mouth; and, in an aweful voice,
Loud calls my ſoul, and utters all I ſing.
How the world falls to pieces round about us,
And leaves us in a ruin of our joy!
What ſays this *tranſportation* of my friends?
It bids me love the place where *now* they dwell,
And ſcorn this wretched ſpot, they leave ſo poor.
Eternity's vaſt *ocean* lies before thee;
There; there, Lorenzo! thy Clariſſa ſails.
Give thy mind ſea-room; keep it wide of *earth*,
That rock of ſouls *immortal*; cut thy cord;
Weigh anchor; ſpread thy ſails; call every wind;
Eye thy *Great Pole-ſtar*; make the land of life.
Two kinds of life has *double-natur'd* man,

And two of death; the *laſt* far more ſevere.
Life *animal* is nurtur'd by the ſun;
Thrives on his bounties, triumphs in his beams.
Life *rational* ſubſiſts on higher food,
Triumphant in *His* beams, who made the day.
When we leave *that* ſun, and are left by *this*,
(The fate of all who die in ſtubborn guilt)
'Tis *utter* darkneſs; ſtrictly *double* death.
We ſink by no *judicial* ſtroke of heaven,
But nature's *courſe*; as ſure as plumbets fall.
Since God, or man, muſt alter, ere they meet,
(Since light and darkneſs blend not in one ſphere)
'Tis manifeſt, Lorenzo! *who* muſt change.
If, then, that *double death* ſhould prove thy lot,
Blame not the bowels of the Deity;
Man ſhall be bleſt, as far as man *permits*.
Not man alone, all *rationals*, heaven arms
With an illuſtrious, but tremendous, power
To counter-act its own moſt gracious ends;
And this, of ſtrict neceſſity, not choice;
That power deny'd, *men*, *angels*, were no more
But paſſive engines, void of praiſe or blame.
A nature *rational* implies the power
Of being bleſt, or wretched, as we pleaſe;
Elſe idle *reaſon* would have nought to do;
And he that would be barr'd capacity
Of pain, courts incapacity of bliſs.
Heaven *wills* our happineſs, *allows* our doom;
Invites us ardently, but not *compels*;
Heaven but *perſuades*, almighty man *decrees*;

Man is the maker of immortal fates.
Man falls by man, if finally he falls;
And fall he *muſt*, who learns from *death* alone,
The dreadful ſecret—That he lives for Ever.
Why *this* to Thee?—Thee yet, perhaps, in doubt
Of ſecond life? But wherefore doubtful ſtill?
Eternal life is nature's ardent wiſh:
What ardently we wiſh, we *ſoon* believe:
Thy *tardy* faith declares that wiſh deſtroy'd:
What has deſtroy'd it?—Shall I tell thee what?
When *fear'd the future*, 'tis no longer wiſh'd;
And, when unwiſh'd, we *ſtrive* to diſbelieve.
"*Thus infidelity our guilt betrays.*"
Nor that the *ſole* detection! Bluſh, Lorenzo!
Bluſh for hypocriſy, if not for guilt.
The *future fear'd?*—An *infidel*, and fear?
Fear what? A *dream?* A *fable?*—How thy dread,
Unwilling evidence, and therefore *ſtrong*,
Affords my cauſe an undeſign'd ſupport!
How *diſbelief* affirms what it denies!
"*It, unawares, aſſerts immortal life.*"—
Surpriſing! *infidelity* turns out
A *creed*, and a *confeſſion of our ſins*:
Apoſtates, *thus*, are orthodox divines.
Lorenzo! with Lorenzo claſh no more;
Nor longer a *tranſparent* vizor wear.
Think'ſt thou, Religion *only* has her maſk?
Our infidels are Satan's hypocrites,
Pretend the worſt, and, at the bottom, *fail.*
When viſited by thought (thought *will* intrude),

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By wonders ſacred nature ſtood control'd;
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In *man's*. His *ſingle* intereſt blows the flame;
His the ſole ſtake; his fate the trumpet ſounds,
Which kindles war immortal. How it burns!
Tumultuous ſwarms of deities in arms!
Force, force oppoſing, till the waves run high,

And

And tempeſt nature's univerſal ſphere.
Such oppoſites eternal, ſtedfaſt, ſtern,
Such foes implacable, are *good*, and *ill*;
Yet man, vain man, would mediate peace between them.
Think not this fiction, "*There was war in heaven.*"
From heaven's high cryſtal mountain, where it hung,
Th' Almighty's out-ſtretch'd arm took down his bow,
And ſhot his indignation at the *deep*:
Re-thunder'd *hell*, and darted all her fires.
And ſeems the ſtake of little moment ſtill?
And ſlumbers *man*, who ſingly caus'd the ſtorm?
He ſleeps.—And art thou ſhock'd at *myſteries?*
The greateſt, Thou. How dreadful to reflect,
What ardour, care, and counſel *mortals* cauſe
In breaſts divine! how little in their own!
Where-e'er I turn, how new *proofs* pour upon me!
How happily this wondrous view ſupports
My former argument! How ſtrongly *ſtrikes*
Immortal life's full demonſtration, *here!*
Why this exertion? Why this ſtrange regard
From heaven's Omnipotent indulg'd to man?—
Becauſe, in man, the glorious dreadful power,
Extremely to be pain'd, or bleſt, for *ever*.
Duration gives importance; ſwells the price.
An angel, if a creature of a day,
What would he be? A trifle of no weight;
Or ſtand, or fall; no matter which; he 's gone.
Becauſe Immortal, therefore is indulg'd
This ſtrange regard of deities to duſt.
Hence heaven looks down on earth with all her eyes:

Like him they ſerve, they *tremble*, and *believe*.
Is there hypocriſy ſo foul as this;
So fatal to the welfare of the world?
What *deteſtation*, what *contempt*, their due!
And, if unpaid, be thank'd for their eſcape
That Chriſtian candour they *ſtrive* hard to ſcorn:
If not for that aſylum, they might find
A hell on *earth*; nor 'ſcape a worſe *below*.
With inſolence, and impotence of thought,
Inſtead of racking fancy, to *refute*,
Reform thy manners, and the truth *enjoy*.—
But ſhall I dare confeſs the dire reſult?
Can thy proud *reaſon* brook ſo black a brand?
From *purer manners*, to *ſublimer faith*,
Is nature's unavoidable aſcent;
An *honeſt* deiſt, where the goſpel ſhines,
Matur'd to nobler, in the *Chriſtian* ends.
When that bleſt change arrives, e'en caſt aſide
This ſong ſuperfluous; *life immortal* ſtrikes
Conviction, in a flood of light *divine*.
A *Chriſtian* dwells, like * Uriel, in the ſun;
Meridian evidence puts *doubt* to flight;
And ardent *hope* anticipates the ſkies.
Of *that* bright ſun, Lorenzo! ſcale the ſphere;
'Tis eaſy! it invites thee; it deſcends
From heaven to wooe, and waft thee whence it came:
Read and revere the *ſacred page*; a page
Where triumphs *immortality*; a page
Which not the whole *creation* could produce;

Which

* Milton.

There 's no conſiſtence, meaning, plan, or end,
In all beneath the ſun, in all above,
(As far as man can penetrate), or heaven.
Is an immenſe, ineſtimable prize;
Or all is Nothing, or that prize is all.—
And ſhall each *toy* be ſtill a match for heaven,
And full equivalent for groans below?
Who would not give a trifle to *prevent*
What he would give a thouſand worlds to *cure?*
Lorenzo! thou haſt ſeen (if thine to ſee)
All *nature*, and her God (by nature's *courſe*,
And nature's courſe *control'd*) declare for me:
The ſkies above proclaim, "*immortal* man!"
And, "man *immortal!*" all below reſounds.
The world 's a ſyſtem of theology,
Read by the greateſt ſtrangers to the ſchools;
If *honeſt*, learn'd; and *ſages* o'er a plough.
Is not, Lorenzo! then, impos'd on thee
This hard alternative; or, to renounce
Thy *reaſon*, or thy *ſenſe*; or, to *believe?*
What then is *unbelief?* 'Tis an exploit;
A ſtrenuous enterprize: to gain it, man
Muſt burſt through every bar of common ſenſe,
Of common ſhame, magnanimouſly wrong;
And what rewards the ſturdy combatant?
His prize, *repentance*; *infamy*, his crown.
But wherefore, *infamy?*—For want of *faith*,
Down the ſteep precipice of *wrong* he ſlides;
There 's nothing to ſupport him in the *right*.
Faith in the future wanting is at leaſt

In

Mine, to bleſs heaven, and triumph in *your* praiſe.
But ſince ſo peſtilential your diſeaſe,
Though ſovereign is the medicine I preſcribe,
As yet, I 'll neither triumph, nor deſpair:
But hope, ere long, my *midnight dream* will wake
Your hearts, and teach your *wiſdom*—to be wiſe:
For why ſhould ſouls immortal, made for bliſs,
E'er wiſh (and wiſh in vain!) that ſouls could die?
What ne'er *can* die, oh! grant to *live*; and crown
The wiſh, and aim, and labour of the ſkies;
Increaſe, and *enter* on the joys of heaven:
Thus ſhall my title paſs a *ſacred* ſeal,
Receive an *imprimatur* from Above,
While angels ſhout—*An Infidel Reclaim'd!*

To cloſe, Lorenzo! ſpite of all my pains,
Still ſeems it ſtrange, that thou ſhould'ſt live *for ever?*
Is it *leſs* ſtrange, that thou ſhould'ſt live *at all?*
This is a miracle; and *That* no more.
Who gave beginning, can exclude an end.
Deny thou *art*: Then, doubt if thou *ſhalt be.*
A miracle with miracles inclos'd,
Is man: and ſtarts his faith at what is *ſtrange?*
What leſs than wonders, from the *wonderful*;
What leſs than miracles, from God, can flow?
Admit a God—that myſtery ſupreme!
That cauſe uncaus'd! all other wonders ceaſe;
Nothing is marvellous for *Him* to do:
Deny Him—all is myſtery beſides;
Millions of myſteries! *Each* darker far,
Than *that* thy wiſdom would, unwiſely, ſhun.

If

If *weak* thy faith, why chuſe the harder ſide?
We nothing *know*, but what is marvellous;
Yet what is marvellous, we can't *believe*.
So *weak* our *reaſon*, and ſo *great* our God,
What moſt ſurprizes in the *ſacred page*,
Or full as ſtrange, or ſtranger, *muſt* be true.
Faith is not *reaſon's* labour, but repoſe.
To *faith*, and *virtue*, why ſo backward, man?
From hence:—The *preſent* ſtrongly ſtrikes us all;
The *future*, faintly; can we, then, be *men?*
If men, Lorenzo! the *reverſe* is right.
Reaſon is man's peculiar: *Senſe*, the brute's.
The *preſent* is the ſcanty realm of *ſenſe*;
The *future*, *reaſon's* empire unconfin'd:
On *that* expending all her godlike power,
She plans, provides, expatiates, triumphs, *there*;
There, builds her *bleſſings!* There, expects her *praiſe*;
And nothing aſks of *fortune*, or of *men*.
And what is *reaſon?* Be ſhe, thus, defin'd;
Reaſon is *upright ſtature* in the *ſoul*.
Oh! be a *man*; and ſtrive to be a *god*.
"For what? (thou ſay'ſt) To damp the joys of life?"
No; to give *heart* and *ſubſtance* to thy joys.
That tyrant, *hope*; mark how ſhe domineers;
She bids us quit realities, for dreams;
Safety and peace for hazard, and alarm;
That tyrant o'er the tyrants of the ſoul,
She bids *ambition* quit its taken prize,
Spurn the luxuriant branch on which *it* ſits,
Though bearing crowns, to ſpring at *diſtant* game;

And plunge in toils and dangers—for repoſe.
If *hope* precarious, and of things, when gain'd,
Of little moment, and as little ſtay,
Can ſweeten toils, and dangers into joys;
What then, *that* hope, which nothing can defeat,
Our leave unaſk'd? Rich hope of boundleſs bliſs!
Bliſs, paſt *man's* power to paint it; *time's* to cloſe!
This hope is earth's moſt eſtimable prize:
This is man's portion, while no more than man:
Hope, of all paſſions, moſt befriends us *here*;
Paſſions of prouder name befriend us leſs.
Joy has her *tears*; and *tranſport* has her *death*;
Hope, like a cordial, innocent, though ſtrong,
Man's heart, at once, *inſpirits*, and *ſerenes*;
Nor makes him pay his wiſdom for his joys;
'Tis all our preſent ſtate can *ſafely* bear,
Health to the frame! and vigour to the mind!
A joy attemper'd! a *chaſtis'd* delight!
Like the fair ſummer evening, mild, and ſweet!
'Tis man's full cup; his paradiſe below!
A bleſt hereafter, *then*, or hop'd, or gain'd,
Is All; our *whole* of happineſs: full proof,
I choſe no trivial or inglorious *theme*.
And know, ye foes to ſong! (well-meaning men,
Though quite forgotten * half your Bible's praiſe!)
Important truths, in ſpite of *verſe*, may pleaſe:
Grave minds you praiſe; nor can you praiſe too much:
If there is weight in an Eternity,
Let the *grave* liſten;—and be *graver* ſtill.

NIGHT

* The poetical parts of it.

NIGHT THE EIGHTH.

VIRTUE's APOLOGY

OR,

THE MAN OF THE WORLD ANSWERED

IN WHICH ARE CONSIDERED,

The Love of this Life; the Ambition and Pleaſu
with the Wit and Wiſdom of the World.

AND has all nature, then, eſpous'd my part?
Have I brib'd heaven and earth to plead againſt th
And is thy ſoul *immortal?*—What remains?
All, All, Lorenzo!—Make immortal, bleſt.
Unbleſt immortals!—What can ſhock us more?
And yet Lorenzo ſtill affects *the world*;
There, ſtows his treaſure; thence, his title draws,
Man of the world (for ſuch wouldſt thou be call'd)
And art thou proud of that inglorious ſtyle?
Proud of reproach? for a reproach it *was*,
In antient days; and CHRISTIAN—in an age,
When men were men, and not aſham'd of heaven—
Fir'd their ambition, as it crown'd their joy.
Sprinkled with dews from the Caſtalian font,
Fain would I re-baptize thee, and confer
A purer ſpirit, and a nobler name.

Thy fond attachments fatal, and inflam'd,
Point out my path, and dictate to my ſong:
To Thee, the *world how fair!* How ſtrongly ſtrikes
Ambition! and gay *pleaſure* ſtronger ſtill!
Thy triple bane! the triple bolt that lays
Thy virtue dead! Be *theſe* my triple theme;
Nor ſhall thy *wit*, or *wiſdom*, be forgot.
Common the theme; not ſo the ſong; if ſhe
My ſong invokes, Urania, deigns to ſmile.
The charm that chains us to the world, her foe,
If ſhe diſſolves, the *man of earth*, at once,
Starts from his trance, and ſighs for other ſcenes;
Scenes, where theſe ſparks of night, theſe *ſtars*, ſhall ſhine
Unnumber'd ſuns (for all things, as they *are*,
The bleſt behold;) and, in one glory, pour
Their blended blaze on man's aſtoniſh'd ſight;
A blaze—the leaſt illuſtrious object *there*.
Lorenzo! ſince *eternal* is at hand,
To ſwallow *time's* ambitions; as the vaſt
Leviathan, the bubbles vain, that ride
High on the foaming billow; what avail
High titles, high deſcent, attainments high,
If unattain'd our *higheſt?* O Lorenzo!
What lofty thoughts, theſe elements above,
What towering hopes, what ſallies from the ſun,
What grand ſurveys of deſtiny divine,
And pompous preſage of unfathom'd fate,
Should roll in boſoms, where a ſpirit burns,
Bound for eternity! In boſoms read
By *Him*, who foibles in archangels ſees!

On

On human hearts *He* bends a jealous eye,
And marks, and in heaven's regiſter inrolls,
The riſe, and progreſs, of each option there;
Sacred to doomſday! *That* the page unfolds,
And ſpreads us to the gaze of gods and men.
  And what an option, O Lorenzo! thine?
This world! and This, unrival'd by the ſkies!
A world, where luſt of *pleaſure, grandeur, gold,*
Three *dæmons* that divide its realms between them,
With ſtrokes alternate buffet to and fro
Man's reſtleſs heart, their ſport, their flying ball;
Till, with the giddy circle ſick, and tir'd,
It pants for peace, and drops into deſpair.
Such is the world Lorenzo ſets above
That glorious *promiſe* angels were eſteem'd
Too *mean* to bring; a promiſe, their *Ador'd*
Deſcended to communicate, and preſs,
By counſel, miracle, life, death, on man.
Such is the world Lorenzo's wiſdom wooes,
And on its thorny pillow ſeeks repoſe;
A pillow, which, like opiates ill-prepar'd,
Intoxicates, but not compoſes; fills
The viſionary mind with gay chimæras,
All the wild traſh of ſleep, without the reſt;
What *unfeign'd* travel, and what dreams of joy!
  How frail, men, things! how momentary, both!
Fantaſtic chace of ſhadows hunting ſhades!
The *gay*, the *buſy*, equal, though unlike;
Equal in wiſdom, differently wiſe!
Through flowery meadows, and through dreary waſtes,

One buſtling, and one dancing, into death.
There 's not a day, but, to the man of thought,
Betrays ſome ſecret, that throws new reproach
On life, and makes him ſick of ſeeing more.
The ſcenes of *buſineſs* tell us—"What are men;"
The ſcenes of *pleaſure*—"What is all beſide;"
There, others we deſpiſe; and *Here*, ourſelves.
Amid *diſguſt* eternal, dwells delight?
'Tis *approbation* ſtrikes the ſtring of joy.

What wondrous prize has kindled this career,
Stuns with the din, and choaks us with the duſt,
On life's gay ſtage, one inch above the grave?
The *proud* run up and down in queſt of eyes;
The *ſenſual*, in purſuit of ſomething worſe;
The *grave*, of gold; the *politic*, of power,
And all, of other butterflies, as vain!
As eddies draw things frivolous and light,
How is man's heart by *vanity* drawn in;
On the ſwift circle of returning toys,
Whirl'd, ſtraw-like, round and round, and then ingulph'd;
Where gay deluſion darkens to deſpair!
"*This is a beaten track.*"—Is this a track
Should not be beaten? never beat enough,
Till enough learn'd the truths it would inſpire.
Shall Truth be ſilent, becauſe Folly *frowns?*
Turn the world's hiſtory; what find we there,
But *fortune's* ſports, or *nature's* cruel claims,
Or *woman's* artifice, or *man's* revenge,
And endleſs inhumanities on man?
Fame's trumpet ſeldom ſounds, but, like the knell,

It

It brings bad tidings: how it hourly blows
Man's miſadventures round the liſtening world!
Man is the tale of narrative old *time*;
Sad tale; which high as Paradiſe begins;
As if, the toil of travel to delude,
From ſtage to ſtage, in his eternal round,
The *days*, his daughters, as they ſpin our hours
On *fortune's* wheel, where accident unthought
Oft, in a moment, ſnaps life's ſtrongeſt thread,
Each, in her turn, ſome tragic ſtory tells,
With, now-and-then, a wretched farce between,
And fills his chronicle with human woes.

Time's daughters, true as thoſe of men, deceive us;
Not one, but puts ſome cheat on all mankind:
While in their *father's* boſom, not yet *ours*,
They flatter our fond hopes; and promiſe much
Of amiable; but hold *him* not o'erwiſe,
Who dares to truſt them; and laugh round the year,
At ſtill-confiding, ſtill-confounded, man,
Confiding, though confounded; hoping on,
Untaught by trial, unconvinc'd by proof,
And ever-looking for the never-ſeen.
Life to the laſt, like harden'd felons, lyes;
Nor owns itſelf a cheat, till it expires.
Its little joys go out by One and One,
And leave poor man, at length, in perfect night;
Night darker, than what, *now*, involves the pole.

O Thou, who doſt permit theſe ills to fall,
For gracious ends, and would'ſt that man ſhould mourn!
O Thou, whoſe hands this goodly fabric fram'd,

Who

Who know'ſt it beſt, and would'ſt that man ſhould know!
What is this ſublunary world? A vapour;
A vapour all it holds; itſelf, a vapour;
From the damp bed of chaos, by Thy beam
Exhal'd, ordain'd to ſwim its deſtin'd hour
In ambient air, then melt, and diſappear.
Earth's days are number'd, nor remote her doom;
As mortal, though leſs tranſient, than her ſons;
Yet they doat on her, as the world and they
Were both eternal, ſolid; Thou, a dream.
They doat! on what? *Immortal views* apart,
A region of outſides! a land of ſhadows!
A fruitful field of flowery promiſes!
A wilderneſs of joys! perplex'd with doubts,
And ſharp with thorns! a troubled *ocean*, ſpread
With bold adventurers, their *all* on board!
No ſecond hope, if here their fortune frowns;
Frown ſoon it *muſt*. Of various rates they ſail,
Of enſigns various; All alike in This,
All reſtleſs, anxious; toſt with hopes, and fears,
In calmeſt ſkies; obnoxious All to ſtorm;
And ſtormy the moſt general blaſt of life:
All bound for happineſs; yet few provide
The chart of *knowledge*, pointing where it lies;
Or *virtue's* helm, to ſhape the courſe deſign'd:
All, more or leſs, capricious fate lament,
Now lifted by the tide, and now reſorb'd,
And farther from their wiſhes than before:
All, more or leſs, againſt each other daſh,
To mutual hurt, by guſts of paſſion driven,

And

And ſuffering more from folly, than from fate.
Ocean! Thou dreadful and tumultuous home
Of dangers, at eternal war with man!
Death's capital, where moſt he domineers,
With all his choſen *terrors* frowning round,
(Though lately feaſted high at * Albion's coſt)
Wide-opening, and loud-roaring ſtill for more!
Too faithful mirror! how doſt thou reflect
The melancholy face of human life!
The ſtrong reſemblance tempts me farther ſtill:
And, haply, Britain may be deeper ſtruck
By *moral truth*, in ſuch a mirror ſeen,
Which nature holds for ever at her eye.
Self-flatter'd, unexperienc'd, high in hope,
When *young*, with ſanguine chear, and ſtreamers gay,
We cut our cable, launch into the world,
And fondly dream each wind and ſtar our friend;
All, in ſome darling enterprize embark'd:
But where is he can fathom its extent?
Amid a multitude of artleſs hands,
Ruin's ſure perquiſite! her lawful prize!
Some ſteer aright; but the black blaſt blows hard,
And puffs them wide of hope: with hearts of proof,
Full againſt wind and tide, *ſome* win their way;
And when ſtrong effort has deſerv'd the port,
And tugg'd it into view, 'tis won! 'tis loſt!
Though ſtrong their oar, ſtill ſtronger is their fate:
They ſtrike; and while they triumph, they expire.
In ſtreſs of weather, *moſt*; *ſome* ſink outright;

O'er

* Admiral Balchen, &c.

O'er them, and o'er their names, the billows close;
To-morrow knows not they were ever born.
Others a short memorial leave behind,
Like a flag floating, when the bark 's ingulph'd;
It floats a moment, and is seen no more:
One Cæsar lives; a thousand are forgot.
How few, beneath auspicious planets born,
(Darlings of Providence! fond fate's elect!)
With swelling sails make good the promis'd port,
With all their wishes freighted! yet ev'n These,
Freighted with all their wishes, soon complain;
Free from misfortune, not from nature free,
They still are men; and when is man secure?
As fatal *time*, as *storm!* the rush of years
Beats down their strength; their numberless escapes
In ruin end: and, now, their proud success
But plants *new* terrors on the victor's brow:
What pain to quit the world, just made their own,
Their nest so deeply drown'd, and built so high!
Too low they build, who build beneath the stars.
Woe then apart (if woe apart can be
From mortal man), and fortune at our nod,
The gay! rich! great! triumphant! and august!
What are they?—The *most* happy (strange to say!)
Convince *me* most of human misery;
What are they? Smiling wretches of *to-morrow!*
More wretched, *then*, than e'er their slave *can* be;
Their treacherous blessings, at the day of need,
Like other faithless friends, unmask, and sting:
Then, what provoking indigence in wealth!

Wh

What aggravated impotence in power!
High titles, *then*, what inſult of their pain!
If that ſole anchor, equal to the waves,
Immortal hope! defies not the rude ſtorm,
Takes comfort from the foaming billows' rage,
And makes a welcome harbour of the tomb.
Is This a *ſketch* of what thy ſoul admires?
"But here (thou ſay'ſt) the miſeries of life
"Are huddled in a group. A more diſtinct
"Survey, perhaps, might bring thee better news."
Look on life's ſtages: they ſpeak plainer ſtill;
The plainer they, thee deeper wilt thou ſigh.
Look on thy lovely boy; in him behold
The beſt that can befal the beſt on earth;
The boy has virtue by his *mother's* ſide:
Yes, on Florello look: a *father's* heart
Is tender, though the *man's* is made of ſtone;
The truth, through ſuch a medium ſeen, may make
Impreſſion deep, and fondneſs prove thy friend.
Florello lately caſt on this rude coaſt
A helpleſs infant; now a heedleſs child;
To poor Clariſſa's throes, thy care ſucceeds;
Care full of love, and yet ſevere as hate!
O'er thy ſoul's joy how oft thy fondneſs frowns!
Needful auſterities his will reſtrain;
As thorns fence-in the tender plant from harm.
As yet, his *reaſon* cannot go alone;
But aſks a ſterner nurſe to lead it on.
His little heart is often terrify'd;
The bluſh of morning, in his cheek, turns pale;

Its pearly dew-drop trembles in his eye;
His harmleſs eye! and drowns an angel there.
Ah! what avails his innocence? The taſk
Injoin'd muſt diſcipline his early powers;
He learns to ſigh, ere he is known to ſin;
Guiltleſs, and ſad! a wretch before the fall!
How cruel this! more cruel to forbear.
Our *nature* ſuch, with *neceſſary* pains,
We purchaſe proſpects of *precarious* peace:
Though not a *father*, This might ſteal a ſigh.
Suppoſe him diſciplin'd aright (if not,
'Twill ſink our poor account to poorer ſtill);
Ripe from the tutor, proud of liberty,
He leaps incloſure, bounds into the world!
The world is taken, after ten years toil,
Like antient Troy; and all its joys his own.
Alas! the world 's a tutor more ſevere;
Its leſſons hard, and ill deſerve his pains;
Unteaching All his virtuous nature taught,
Or books (fair virtue's advocates!) inſpir'd.
For who receives him into public life?
Men of the world, the terræ-filial breed,
Welcome the modeſt ſtranger to their ſphere,
(Which glitter'd long, at diſtance, in his ſight)
And, in their hoſpitable arms, incloſe:
Men, who think nought ſo ſtrong of the romance,
So rank knight-errant, as a real friend:
Men, that act up to *reaſon's* golden rule,
All weakneſs of *affection* quite ſubdued:
Men, that would bluſh at being *thought* ſincere,

And feign, for glory, the *few* faults they want;
That love a lye, where truth would pay as well;
As if, to Them, *vice* ſhone her own reward.
Lorenzo! canſt thou bear a ſhocking ſight?
Such, for Florello's ſake, 'twill now appear:
See, the ſteel'd files of ſeaſon'd veterans,
Train'd to the world, in burniſh'd falſehood bright;
Deep in the fatal ſtratagems of peace;
All ſoft ſenſation, in the throng, rubb'd off;
All their keen purpoſe, in politeneſs, ſheath'd;
His friends eternal—during intereſt;
His foes implacable—when worth their while;
At war with every welfare, but their own;
As wiſe as Lucifer; and half as good;
And by whom none, but Lucifer, can gain—
Naked, through Theſe (ſo common fate ordains),
Naked of heart, his cruel courſe he runs,
Stung out of All, moſt amiable in life,
Prompt truth, and open thought, and ſmiles unfeign'd;
Affection, as his ſpecies, wide diffus'd;
Noble preſumptions to mankind's renown;
Ingenuous truſt, and confidence of love.
Theſe claims to joy (if mortals joy might claim)
Will coſt him many a ſigh; till time, and paine,
From the ſlow miſtreſs of this ſchool, *Experience*,
And her aſſiſtant, pauſing, pale, *Diſtruſt*,
Purchaſe a dear-bought clue to lead his youth
Through ſerpentine obliquities of life,
And the dark labyrinth of human-hearts.
And happy! if the clue ſhall come ſo cheap;

For, while we learn to fence with public guilt,
Full oft we feel its foul contagion too,
If leſs than heavenly virtue is our guard.
Thus, a ſtrange kind of curſt neceſſity
Brings down the ſterling temper of his ſoul,
By baſe alloy, to bear the current ſtamp,
Below call'd wiſdom; ſinks him into ſafety;
And brands him into credit with the *world*;
Where ſpecious titles dignify diſgrace,
And nature's injuries are arts of life;
Where brighter reaſon prompts to bolder crimes;
And heavenly talents make infernal hearts;
That unſurmountable extreme of guilt!
Poor Machiavel! who labour'd hard his plan,
Forgot, that genius need not go to ſchool;
Forgot, that man, without a tutor wiſe,
His plan had practis'd, long before 't was writ.
The world 's all *title-page*; there 's no *contents*;
The world 's all *face*; the man who ſhews his *heart*,
Is whooted for his nudities, and ſcorn'd.
A man I knew, who liv'd upon a ſmile;
And well it fed him; he look'd plump and fair;
While rankeſt venom foam'd through every vein.
Lorenzo! what I tell thee, take not ill!
Living, he fawn'd on every *fool* alive;
And, dying, curs'd the *friend* on whom he liv'd.
To ſuch proficients thou art half a ſaint.
In foreign realms (for thou haſt travel'd far)
How curious to contemplate two ſtate-rooks,
Studious their neſts to feather in a trice,

With all the *necromantics* of their art,
Playing the game of *faces* on each other,
Making court ſweet-meats of their latent gall,
In fooliſh hope, to ſteal each other's truſt;
Both cheating, both exulting, both deceiv'd;
And, ſometimes, both (let earth rejoice) undone!
Their parts we doubt not; but be That their ſhame;
Shall men of talents, fit to rule mankind,
Stoop to mean wiles, that would diſgrace a fool;
And loſe the thanks of thoſe few friends they ſerve?
For who can thank the man, he cannot *ſee?*
Why ſo much cover? It defeats itſelf.
Ye, that know all things! know ye not, mens hearts
Are therefore known, *becauſe* they are conceal'd?
For why conceal'd?—The cauſe they need not tell.
I give him joy, that 's aukward at a lye;
Whoſe feeble nature *truth* keeps ſtill in awe;
His incapacity is his renown.
'Tis great, 'tis manly, to diſdain *diſguiſe*;
It ſhews our ſpirit, or it proves our ſtrength.
Thou ſay'ſt, 'Tis *needful*: is it therefore *right?*
Howe'er, I grant it ſome ſmall ſign of grace,
To ſtrain at an excuſe: and wouldſt thou then
Eſcape that cruel *need?* Thou may'ſt, with eaſe;
Think no poſt *needful* that demands a knave.
When late our civil helm was ſhifting hands,
So Pulteney thought: think better if you can.
But this, how rare! the public path of life
Is dirty:—yet, allow that dirt its due,
It makes the noble mind more noble ſtill:

The world 's no neuter; it will wound, or ſave;
Or virtue quench, or indignation fire.
You ſay, The world, well-known, will make a *man:*
The world, well-known, will give our hearts to heaven,
Or make us *dæmons*, long before we die.
To ſhew how fair the world, *thy* miſtreſs, ſhines,
Take *either* part, ſure ills attend the choice;
Sure, though not equal, detriment enſues.
Not *virtue's*-ſelf is deify'd on earth;
Virtue has her relapſes, conflicts, foes;
Foes, that ne'er fail to make her feel their hate.
Virtue has her peculiar ſet of pains.
True friends to virtue, *laſt*, and *leaſt*, complain;
But if *they* ſigh, can *others* hope to ſmile?
If *wiſdom* has her miſeries to mourn,
How can poor *folly* lead a happy life?
And if *both* ſuffer, what has earth to boaſt,
Where he *moſt* happy, who the *leaſt* laments!
Where *much*, *much* patience, the moſt envy'd ſtate,
And *ſome* forgiveneſs, needs, the beſt of friends?
For friend, or happy life, who looks not higher,
Of neither ſhall he find the ſhadow *here*.
The world's ſworn advocate, without a fee
Lorenzo ſmartly, with a ſmile, replies;
" Thus far thy ſong is right; and All muſt own,
" Virtue *has her peculiar ſet of pains*.—
" And *joys peculiar* who to *vice* denies?
" If vice it is, with nature to comply:
" If *pride*, and *ſenſe*, are ſo predominant,
" To *check*, not *overcome*, them, makes a ſaint,

" Can

" Can nature in a plainer voice proclaim
" *Pleaſure*, and *glory*, the chief good of man?"
Can *pride*, and *ſenſuality*, rejoice?
From purity of thought, all *pleaſure* ſprings;
And, from an humble ſpirit, all our *peace*.
Ambition, *pleaſure!* let us talk of Theſe:
Of Theſe, the Porch, and Academy, talk'd;
Of Theſe, each following age had much to ſay:
Yet, unexhauſted, ſtill, the needful theme.
Who talks of *theſe*, to mankind all at once,
He talks; for where the ſaint from either free?
Are Theſe thy refuge?—No: theſe ruſh upon thee;
Thy vitals ſeize, and *vulture*-like, devour:
I 'll try, if I can pluck thee from thy rock,
Prometheus! from this barren ball of earth;
If *reaſon* can unchain thee, thou art free.
And, firſt, thy *Caucaſus*, ambition, calls;
Mountain of torments! eminence of woes!
Of courted woes! and courted through miſtake!
'Tis not ambition charms thee; 'tis a cheat
Will make thee ſtart, as H—— at his *Moor*.
Doſt graſp at greatneſs? Firſt, know what it is:
Think'ſt thou thy greatneſs in *diſtinction* lies?
Not in the feather, wave it e'er ſo high,
By *fortune* ſtuck, to mark us from the throng,
Is glory lodg'd: 'tis lodg'd in the reverſe;
In that which joins, in that which equals, All,
The monarch and his ſlave;—" A deathleſs ſoul,
" Unbounded proſpect, and immortal kin,
" A Father God, and brothers in the ſkies;"

Elder, indeed, in time; but leſs remote
In excellence, perhaps, than thought by man;
Why greater what can fall, than what can riſe?
If ſtill delirious, now, Lorenzo! go;
And with thy full-blown brothers of the *world*,
Throw ſcorn around thee; caſt it on thy ſlaves;
Thy ſlaves, and equals: how ſcorn caſt on Them
Rebounds on Thee! if man is mean, as man,
Art thou a god? If *fortune* makes him ſo,
Beware the conſequence: a maxim That,
Which draws a monſtrous picture of mankind,
Where, in the drapery, the *man* is loſt;
Externals fluttering, and the ſoul forgot.
Thy greateſt glory, when diſpos'd to boaſt,
Boaſt *that* aloud, in which thy ſervants ſhare.
We wiſely ſtrip the ſteed we mean to buy:
Judge we, in their capariſons, of *men?*
It nought avails thee, *where*, but *what*, thou art;
All the diſtinctions of this little life
Are quite cutaneous, foreign to the man,
When, through death's ſtreights, *earth's* ſubtle ſerpents creep,
Which wriggle into wealth, or climb renown.
As crooked Satan the forbidden tree,
They leave their party-colour'd robe behind,
All that now glitters, while they rear aloft
Their brazen creſts, and hiſs at us below.
Of fortune's *fucus* ſtrip them, yet alive;
Strip them of body, too; nay, cloſer ſtill,
Away with all, but *moral*, in their minds;

And

And let, what then remains, impoſe their name,
Pronounce them Weak, or Worthy; Great, or Mean.
How mean that ſnuff of glory *fortune* lights,
And *death* puts out! Doſt thou demand a teſt,
A teſt, at once, infallible, and ſhort,
Of *real* Greatneſs? That man Greatly lives,
Whate'er his fate, or fame, who Greatly dies;
High-fluſh'd with hope, where heroes ſhall deſpair.
If *this* a true criterion, many courts,
Illuſtrious, might afford but few grandees.
Th' Almighty, from his throne, on earth ſurveys
Nought Greater, than an honeſt, Humble Heart;
An Humble Heart, *His* reſidence! pronounc'd
His ſecond ſeat; and rival to the ſkies.
The private path, the ſecret acts of men,
If noble, far the nobleſt of our lives!
How far above Lorenzo's glory ſits
Th' illuſtrious maſter of a name *unknown*;
Whoſe worth unrival'd, and unwitneſs'd, loves
Life's ſacred ſhades, where gods converſe with men;
And *peace*, beyond the world's conceptions, ſmiles!
As thou (now dark), before we part, ſhalt ſee.
But thy Great Soul this *ſkulking* glory ſcorns.
Lorenzo 's ſick, but when Lorenzo 's ſeen;
And, when he ſhrugs at public buſineſs, lyes.
Deny'd the public eye, the public voice,
As if he liv'd on others' breath, he dies.
Fain would he make the world his pedeſtal;
Mankind the gazers, the ſole figure, He.
Knows he, that mankind praiſe againſt their will,

And mix as much detraction as they can?
Knows he, that faithleſs *fame* her whiſper has,
As well as trumpet? That his vanity
Is ſo much tickled from not hearing *All?*
Knows this all-knower, that from itch of praiſe,
Or, from an itch more ſordid, when he ſhines
Taking his country by five hundred ears,
Senates at once admire him, and deſpiſe,
With modeſt laughter lining loud applauſe,
Which makes the ſmile more mortal to his fame?
His *fame*, which (like the mighty Cæſar), crown'd
With laurels, in full ſenate, greatly falls,
By *ſeeming* friends, that honour, and deſtroy.
We riſe in glory, as we ſink in pride:
Where boaſting ends, there dignity begins:
And yet, miſtaken beyond all miſtake,
The blind Lorenzo's proud—of being proud;
And dreams himſelf aſcending in his fall.
An eminence, though fancy'd, turns the brain:
All vice wants *bellebore*; but of all vice,
Pride loudeſt calls, and for the largeſt bowl;
Becauſe, unlike all other vice, it flies,
In *fact*, the point, in *fancy* moſt purſued.
Who court applauſe, oblige the world in *this*;
They gratify man's paſſion to *refuſe*.
Superior honour, when *aſſum'd*, is *loſt*;
Ev'n good men turn *banditti*, and rejoice,
Like Kouli-Kan, in plunder of the proud.
Though ſomewhat diſconcerted, ſteady ſtill
To the *world's* cauſe, with half a face of joy,

Lorenzo

Lorenzo cries—" Be, then, *ambition* caſt;
" Ambition 's dearer far ſtands unimpeach'd,
" Gay *pleaſure!* proud *ambition* is her ſlave;
" For Her, he ſoars at *great*, and hazards *ill*;
" For Her, he fights, and bleeds, or overcomes;
" And paves his way, with crowns, to reach Her ſmile:
" Who can reſiſt her charms?"—Or, *ſhould?* Lorenzo!
What mortal ſhall reſiſt, where angels yield?
Pleaſure 's the miſtreſs of ethereal powers;
For her contend the rival gods above;
Pleaſure 's the miſtreſs of the world below;
And well it was for man, that *pleaſure* charms;
How would All ſtagnate, but for *pleaſure's* ray!
How would the frozen ſtream of action ceaſe!
What is the pulſe of this ſo buſy world?
The love of *pleaſure*: that, through every vein,
Throws motion, warmth; and ſhuts out death from life.
Though various are the tempers of mankind,
Pleaſure's gay family hold All in chains:
Some moſt affect the black; and ſome, the fair;
Some honeſt *pleaſure* court; and ſome, obſcene.
Pleaſures *obſcene* are various, as the throng
Of paſſions, that can *err* in human hearts;
Miſtake their objects, or trangreſs their bounds.
Think you there 's but one whoredom? Whoredom, All,
But when our *reaſon* licenſes delight.
Doſt doubt, Lorenzo? Thou ſhalt doubt no more.
Thy father chides thy gallantries; yet hugs
An ugly, common harlot, in the dark;
A rank adulterer with others' *gold!*

And that hag, *vengeance*, in a corner, charms.
Hatred her brothel has, as well as *love*,
Where horrid *epicures* debauch in blood.
Whate'er the motive, *pleaſure* is the mark:
For Her, the black aſſaſſin draws his ſword;
For Her, dark ſtateſmen trim their midnight lamp,
To which no *ſingle* ſacrifice may fall;
For Her, the ſaint abſtains; the miſer ſtarves;
The Stoic proud, for *pleaſure*, pleaſure ſcorn'd;
For Her, *affliction's* daughters grief indulge,
And find, or hope, a luxury in tears;
For Her, guilt, ſhame, toil, danger, we defy;
And, with an aim *voluptuous*, ruſh on death.
Thus univerſal her deſpotic power!
And as her empire wide, her praiſe is juſt.
Patron of pleaſure! doater on delight!
I am thy rival; pleaſure I profeſs;
Pleaſure the purpoſe of my gloomy ſong.
Pleaſure is nought but virtue's gayer name;
I wrong her ſtill, I rate her worth too low;
Virtue the root, and pleaſure is the flower;
And honeſt Epicurus' foes were fools.
But this ſounds harſh, and gives the *wiſe* offence;
If o'erſtrain'd wiſdom ſtill retains the *name*.
How knits *auſterity* her cloudy brow,
And blames, as bold, and hazardous, the *praiſe*
Of *pleaſure*, to mankind, *unprais'd*, too dear!
Ye modern Stoics! hear my ſoft reply;
Their ſenſes men *will* truſt: we can't impoſe;
Or, if we could, is impoſition right?

Our

Own *honey ſweet*; but, owning, add this *ſting*;
"When mixt with poiſon, it is deadly too."
Truth never was indebted to a lye.
Is nought but *virtue* to be prais'd, as good?
Why then is health preferr'd before diſeaſe?
What nature loves *is* good, without *our* leave.
And where no future drawback cries, "*Beware*;"
Pleaſure, though not from virtue, *ſhould* prevail.
'Tis balm to life, and gratitude to heaven;
How cold our thanks for bounties unenjoy'd!
The *love of pleaſure* is man's eldeſt-born,
Born in his cradle, living to his tomb;
Wiſdom, her *younger* ſiſter, though more *grave*,
Was meant to *miniſter*, and not to mar,
Imperial *pleaſure*, queen of human hearts.

Lorenzo! Thou, her majeſty's renown'd,
Though uncoiffd counſel, learned in *the world!*
Who think'ſt thyſelf a Murray, with diſdain
May'ſt look on me. Yet, my Demoſthenes!
Canſt thou plead *pleaſure's* cauſe as well as I?
Know'ſt thou her *nature, purpoſe, parentage?*
Attend my ſong, and thou ſhalt know them all;
And know Thyſelf; and know thyſelf to be
(Strange truth!) the moſt abſtemious man alive.
Tell not Caliſta; ſhe will laugh thee dead;
Or ſend thee to her hermitage with L——.
Abſurd preſumption! Thou who never knew'ſt
A ſerious thought! ſhalt thou dare dream of joy?
No man e'er found a *happy life* by chance;
Or yawn'd it into being, with a wiſh;

Or, with the ſnout of groveling *appetite*,
E'er ſmelt it out, and grubb'd it from the dirt.
An *art* it is, and muſt be learnt; and learnt
With unremitting effort, or be loſt;
And leaves us perfect blockheads, in our bliſs.
The clouds may drop down titles and eſtates;
Wealth may ſeek Us; but *wiſdom* muſt be ſought;
Sought before all; but (how unlike all elſe
We ſeek on earth!) 'tis never ſought in vain.
Firſt, *pleaſure's* birth, riſe, ſtrength, and grandeur, ſee.
Brought forth by *wiſdom*, nurſt by *diſcipline*,
By *patience* taught, by *perſeverance* crown'd,
She rears her head majeſtic; round her throne,
Erected in the boſom of the juſt,
Each virtue, lifted, forms her manly guard.
For what are *virtues?* (Formidable name!)
What, but the fountain, or defence, of joy?
Why, then, commanded? Need mankind commands,
At once to *merit*, and to *make*, their bliſs?—
Great Legiſlator! ſcarce ſo great, as kind!
If men are rational, and love delight,
Thy gracious law but flatters human choice;
In the tranſgreſſion lies the penalty;
And they the moſt indulge, who moſt obey.
Of *pleaſure*, next, the final cauſe explore;
Its mighty *purpoſe*, its important *end*.
Not to turn *human* brutal, but to build
Divine on human, *pleaſure* came from heaven.
In aid to *reaſon* was the goddeſs ſent;
To call up all its ſtrength by ſuch a charm.

Pleaſure,

Pleaſure, firſt, ſuccours *virtue*; in return,
Virtue gives *pleaſure* an eternal reign.
What, but the pleaſure of food, friendſhip, faith,
Supports life *natural, civil,* and *divine?*
'Tis from the pleaſure of repaſt, we live;
'Tis from the pleaſure of applauſe, we pleaſe;
'Tis from the pleaſure of belief, we pray
(All prayer would ceaſe, if unbeliev'd the prize):
It ſerves ourſelves, our ſpecies, and our God;
And to ſerve more, is paſt the ſphere of man.
Glide, then, for ever, pleaſure's ſacred ſtream!
Through Eden, as Euphrates ran, it runs,
And foſters every growth of happy life;
Makes a new Eden where it flows;—but ſuch
As *muſt* be loſt, Lorenzo! by thy fall.
"*What mean I by thy fall?*"—Thou 'lt ſhortly ſee,
While pleaſure's *nature* is at large diſplay'd;
Already ſung her *origin,* and *ends.*
Thoſe glorious ends, by kind, or by degree,
When *pleaſure* violates, 'tis then a vice,
And vengeance too; it haſtens into pain.
From due refreſhment, life, health, reaſon, joy;
From wild exceſs, pain, grief, diſtraction, death;
Heaven's juſtice *this* proclaims, and *that* her love.
What greater evil can I wiſh my foe,
Than his full draught of pleaſure, from a caſk
Unbroach'd by *juſt authority,* ungaug'd
By *temperance,* by *reaſon* unrefin'd?
A thouſand dæmons lurk within the lee.
Heaven, others, and ourſelves! uninjur'd *theſe,*

Drink

Drink deep; the deeper, then, the more divine;
Angels are angels, from indulgence *there*;
'Tis unrepenting pleaſure makes a god.
Doſt think thyſelf a god from other joys?
A victim rather! ſhortly ſure to bleed.
The wrong *muſt* mourn: can heaven's appointments fail?
Can man outwit Omnipotence? Strike out
A ſelf-wrought happineſs unmeant by *Him*
Who made us, and the world we would enjoy?
Who forms an inſtrument, ordains from whence
Its diſſonance, or harmony, ſhall riſe.
Heaven bade the ſoul this mortal frame inſpire;
Bade virtue's ray divine inſpire the ſoul
With unprecarious flows of vital joy;
And, without breathing, man as well might hope
For life, as without piety, for peace.
"Is *virtue*, then, and *piety* the ſame?"
No; piety is more; 'tis virtue's ſource;
Mother of every worth, as that of joy.
Men of the world this doctrine ill digeſt;
They ſmile at piety; yet boaſt aloud
Good-will to men; nor know they ſtrive to part
What *nature* joins; and thus confute themſelves.
With *piety* begins all good on earth;
'Tis the firſt-born of rationality.
Conſcience, her firſt law broken, wounded lies;
Enfeebled, lifeleſs, impotent to good;
A feign'd affection bounds her utmoſt power.
Some we can't love, but for the Almighty's ſake;
A foe to God was ne'er true friend to man;

Some

Some ſiniſter intent taints all he does;
And, in his kindeſt actions, he 's unkind.
On piety, humanity is built;
And, on humanity, much happineſs;
And yet ſtill more on piety itſelf.
A ſoul in commerce with her God, is heaven;
Feels not the tumults and the ſhocks of life;
The whirls of paſſions, and the ſtrokes of heart.
A Deity believ'd, is joy begun;
A Deity ador'd, is joy advanc'd;
A Deity belov'd, is joy matur'd.
Each branch of *piety* delight inſpires;
Faith builds a bridge from this world to the next,
O'er death's dark gulph, and all its horror hides;
Praiſe, the ſweet exhalation of our joy,
That joy exalts, and makes it ſweeter ſtill;
Prayer ardent opens heaven, lets down a ſtream
Of glory on the conſecrated hour
Of man, in audience with the Deity.
Who worſhips the *Great God*, that inſtant joins
The firſt in heaven, and ſets his foot on hell.
Lorenzo! when waſt Thou at church *before?*
Thou think'ſt the ſervice long: but is it juſt?
Though juſt, unwelcome: thou hadſt rather tread
Unhallow'd ground; the Muſe, to win thine ear,
Muſt take an air leſs ſolemn. She complies.
Good conſcience! at the ſound *the world* retires;
Verſe diſaffects it, and Lorenzo ſmiles;
Yet has ſhe her *ſeraglio* full of charms;
And ſuch as age ſhall heighten, not impair.

Art

Art thou dejected? Is thy mind o'ercaſt?
Amid her fair-ones, thou the faireſt chuſe,
To chaſe thy gloom.—" Go, fix ſome weighty *truth*;
" Chain down ſome *paſſion*; do ſome *generous good*;
" Teach *ignorance* to ſee, or *grief* to ſmile;
" Correct thy *friend*; befriend thy greateſt *foe*;
" Or with warm heart, and confidence divine,
" Spring up, and lay ſtrong hold on *Him* who made thee."
Thy gloom is ſcatter'd, ſprightly ſpirits flow;
Though wither'd is thy vine, and harp unſtrung.
Doſt call the bowl, the viol, and the dance,
Loud mirth, mad laughter? Wretched comforters!
Phyſicians! more than half of thy diſeaſe.
Laughter, though never cenſur'd yet as ſin,
(Pardon a thought that only *ſeems* ſevere)
Is half-immoral: is it much indulg'd?
By venting ſpleen, or diſſipating thought,
It ſhews a *ſcorner*, or it makes a *fool*;
And ſins, as hurting others, or ourſelves.
'Tis *pride*, or *emptineſs*, applies the ſtraw,
That tickles little minds to mirth effuſe;
Of grief approaching, the portentous ſign!
The houſe of laughter makes a houſe of woe.
A man *triumphant* is a monſtrous ſight;
A man *dejected* is a ſight as mean.
What cauſe for *triumph*, where ſuch ills abound?
What for *dejection*, where preſides a Power,
Who call'd us into being to be bleſt?
So grieve, as conſcious, grief may riſe to joy;
So joy, as conſcious, joy to grief may fall.

Moſt

Moſt true, a wiſe man never will be ſad;
But neither will ſonorous, bubbling mirth,
A ſhallow ſtream of happineſs betray:
Too happy to be ſportive, he 's ſerene.
Yet wouldſt thou laugh (but at thy own expence)
This counſel ſtrange ſhould I preſume to give—
"Retire, and read thy *Bible*, to be gay."
There truths abound of ſovereign aid to peace;
Ah! do not prize them leſs, becauſe inſpir'd,
As thou, and thine, are apt and proud to do.
If *not* inſpir'd, that pregnant page had ſtood,
Time's treaſure! and the wonder of the wiſe!
Thou think'ſt, perhaps, thy *ſoul* alone at ſtake;
Alas!—Should men miſtake thee for a *fool*;—
What man of taſte for genius, wiſdom, truth,
Though tender of thy fame, could interpoſe?
Believe me, ſenſe, *here*, acts a double part,
And the true *critic* is a *Chriſtian* too.
But *theſe*, thou think'ſt, are gloomy paths to joy.—
True joy in ſunſhine ne'er was found at firſt;
They, firſt, themſelves offend, who greatly pleaſe;
And travel only gives us ſound repoſe.
Heaven *ſells* all pleaſure; effort is the price;
The joys of conqueſt are the joys of man;
And *glory* the victorious *laurel* ſpreads
O'er *pleaſure's* pure, perpetual, placid ſtream.
There is a time, when toil muſt be preferr'd,
Or joy, by miſ-tim'd fondneſs, is undone.
A man of *pleaſure* is a man of *pains*.
Thou wilt not take the trouble to be bleſt.

Falſe joys, indeed, are born from want of thought;
From thoughts full bent, and energy, the *true*;
And that demands a mind in equal poize,
Remote from gloomy grief, and glaring joy.
Much joy not only ſpeaks ſmall happineſs,
But happineſs that ſhortly muſt expire.
Can joy, unbottom'd in reflection, ſtand?
And, in a tempeſt, can reflection live?
Can joy, like thine, ſecure itſelf an hour?
Can joy, like thine, meet accident unſhock'd?
Or ope the door to honeſt poverty?
Or talk with threatening death, and not turn pale?
In ſuch a world, and ſuch a nature, *theſe*
Are needful fundamentals of delight:
Theſe fundamentals give delight *indeed*;
Delight, pure, delicate, and durable;
Delight, unſhaken, maſculine, divine;
A conſtant, and a ſound, but *ſerious* joy.
Is joy the daughter of ſeverity?
It is:—yet far my doctrine from ſevere.
"Rejoice for ever:" It becomes a man;
Exalts, and ſets him nearer to the gods.
"Rejoice for ever!" *Nature* cries, "Rejoice;"
And drinks to man, in her nectareous cup,
Mixt up of delicates for every ſenſe;
To the great Founder of the bounteous feaſt,
Drinks glory, gratitude, eternal praiſe;
And he that will not *pledge her*, is a churl.
Ill firmly to ſupport, *good* fully taſte,
Is the whole ſcience of felicity:

Yet *ſparing pledge*: *her* bowl is not the beſt
Mankind can boaſt.—" A rational repaſt;
" Exertion, vigilance, a mind in arms,
" A military diſcipline of thought,
" To foil *temptation* in the doubtful field;
" And ever-waking ardor for *the right*."
'Tis *theſe* firſt give, then guard, a chearful heart.
Nought that is *right*, think little; well aware,
What reaſon bids, God bids; by *His* command
How aggrandiz'd, the ſmalleſt thing we do!
Thus, *nothing* is inſipid to the wiſe;
To thee, inſipid all, but what is *mad*;
Joys ſeaſon'd high, and taſting ſtrong of guilt.
" *Mad!* (thou reply'ſt, with indignation fir'd)
" Of antient ſages proud to tread the ſteps,
" I follow *nature*."—Follow *nature* ſtill,
But look it be thine *own*: Is *conſcience*, then,
No part of nature? Is ſhe not *ſupreme?*
Thou regicide! O raiſe her from the dead!
Then, follow nature; and reſemble God.
When, ſpite of *conſcience*, pleaſure is purſued,
Man's nature is *unnaturally* pleas'd:
And what 's unnatural is painful too
At intervals, and muſt diſguſt ev'n Thee!
The *fact* thou know'ſt; but not, perhaps, the *cauſe*.
Virtue's foundations with the world's were laid;
Heaven mixt her with our make, and twiſted cloſe
Her ſacred intereſts with the ſtrings of life.
Who breaks her aweful mandate, ſhocks himſelf,
His better ſelf: and is it greater pain,

Our *ſoul* ſhould murmur, or our *duſt* repine?
And one, in their eternal war, *muſt* bleed.
If one *muſt* ſuffer, which ſhould leaſt be ſpar'd?
The pains of mind ſurpaſs the pains of ſenſe:
Aſk, then, the gout, what torment is in guilt.
The joys of *ſenſe* to *mental* joys are mean:
Senſe on the preſent only feeds; the ſoul
On paſt, and future, forages for joy.
'Tis hers, by retroſpect, through *time* to range;
And forward *time's* great ſequel to ſurvey.
Could human courts take vengeance on the *mind*,
Axes might ruſt, and racks and gibbets fail:
Guard, then, thy mind, and leave the reſt to fate.
Lorenzo! wilt thou never be a man?
The man is dead, who for the body lives,
Lur'd, by the beating of his pulſe, to liſt
With every luſt, that wars againſt his peace:
And ſets him quite at variance with himſelf.
Thyſelf, firſt, know; then love: a *ſelf* there is
Of virtue fond, that kindles at her charms.
A *ſelf* there is, as fond of every vice,
While every virtue wounds it to the heart:
Humility degrades it, *juſtice* robs,
Bleſt *bounty* beggars it, fair *truth* betrays,
And god-like *magnanimity* deſtroys.
This ſelf, when rival to the former, ſcorn;
When not in competition, kindly treat,
Defend it, feed it:—But when virtue bids,
Toſs it, or to the fowls, or to the flames.
And why? 'Tis love of *pleaſure* bids thee bleed;

Comply, or own self-love *extinct*, or *blind*.
For what is *vice*? Self-love in a miſtake:
A poor blind merchant buying joys too dear.
And *virtue*, what? 'Tis ſelf-love in her wits,
Quite ſkilful in the market of delight.
Self-love's good ſenſe is love of that dread Power,
From whom herſelf, and all ſhe can enjoy.
Other ſelf-love is but diſguis'd ſelf-hate;
More mortal than the malice of our foes;
A ſelf-hate, *now*, ſcarce felt; *then* felt full-ſore,
When being, curſt; extinction, loud implor'd;
And every thing preferr'd to what we *are*.
Yet *this* ſelf-love Lorenzo makes his choice:
And, in this choice triumphant, boaſts of joy.
How is his want of happineſs betray'd,
By diſaffection to the preſent hour!
Imagination wanders far afield:
The future pleaſes: why? The preſent pains.—
"But that 's a *ſecret*." Yes, which all men know;
And know from Thee, diſcover'd unawares.
Thy ceaſeleſs agitation, reſtleſs roll
From cheat to cheat, impatient of a pauſe;
What is it?—'Tis the cradle of the ſoul,
From *inſtinct* ſent, to rock her in diſeaſe,
Which her phyſician, *Reaſon*, will not cure.
A poor expedient! yet thy beſt; and while
It mitigates thy pain, it *owns* it too.
Such are Lorenzo's wretched remedies!
The weak have remedies; the wiſe have joys.
Superior wiſdom is ſuperior bliſs.

And what ſure mark diſtinguiſhes the wiſe?
Conſiſtent wiſdom ever wills the ſame;
Thy fickle wiſh is ever on the wing.
Sick of herſelf, is *folly's* character;
As *wiſdom's* is, a modeſt ſelf-applauſe.
A change of evils is *thy* good ſupreme;
Nor, but in motion, canſt thou find thy reſt.
Man's greateſt ſtrength is ſhewn in ſtanding ſtill.
The firſt ſure ſymptom of a mind in health,
Is reſt of heart, and pleaſure felt at home.
Falſe pleaſure from abroad her joys imports;
Rich from within, and ſelf-ſuſtain'd, the *true*.
The *true* is fixt, and ſolid as a rock;
Slippery the *falſe*, and toſſing, as the wave.
This, a wild wanderer on earth, like Cain;
That, like the fabled, ſelf-enamour'd boy,
Home-contemplation her ſupreme delight;
She dreads an interruption from without,
Smit with her own condition; and the more
Intenſe ſhe gazes, ſtill it charms the more.
No man is happy, till he thinks, on earth
There breathes not a more happy than himſelf:
Then envy dies, and love o'erflows on All;
And love o'erflowing makes an angel Here.
Such angels, All, intitled to repoſe
On *Him* who governs fate: though tempeſt frowns,
Though nature ſhakes, how ſoft to lean on heaven!
To lean on *Him*, on whom archangels lean!
With inward eyes, and ſilent as the grave,
They ſtand collecting every beam of thought,

Till

Till their hearts kindle with divine delight;
For all their thoughts, like angels, ſeen of old
In Iſrael's dream, come from, and go to, heaven:
Hence, are *they* ſtudious of ſequeſter'd ſcenes;
While noiſe, and diſſipation, comfort *thee.*
Were all men happy, revelings would ceaſe,
That opiate for inquietude within.
Lorenzo! never man was truly bleſt,
But it compos'd, and gave him ſuch a caſt,
As *folly* might miſtake for want of joy.
A caſt, unlike the triumph of the proud;
A modeſt aſpect, and a ſmile at heart.
O for a joy from thy Philander's ſpring!
A ſpring perennial, riſing in the breaſt,
And permanent, as pure! no turbid ſtream
Of rapturous exultation, ſwelling high;
Which, like land-floods, impetuous pour a while,
Then ſink at once, and leave us in the mire.
What does the man, who tranſient joy prefers?
What, but prefer the bubbles to the ſtream?
Vain are all ſudden ſallies of delight;
Convulſions of a weak, diſtemper'd joy.
Joy 's a fixt ſtate; a tenure, not a ſtart.
Bliſs there is none, but *unprecarious* bliſs:
That is the gem: ſell All, and purchaſe That.
Why go a-begging to contingencies,
Not gain'd with eaſe, nor ſafely lov'd, if gain'd?
At good fortuitous, draw back, and pauſe;
Suſpect it; what thou canſt enſure, enjoy;
And nought but what thou giv'ſt thyſelf, is ſure.

Reaſon perpetuates joy that reaſon gives,
And makes it as immortal as herſelf:
To mortals, nought immortal, but their worth.
Worth, conſcious worth! ſhould *abſolutely* reign;
And other joys aſk leave for their approach;
Nor, unexamin'd, ever leave obtain.
Thou art all anarchy; a mob of joys
Wage war, and periſh in inteſtine broils;
Not the leaſt promiſe of internal peace!
No boſom-comfort! or unborrow'd bliſs!
Thy thoughts are vagabonds; All outward-bound,
'Mid ſands, and rocks, and ſtorms, to cruiſe for pleaſure;
If gain'd, dear-bought; and better miſs'd than gain'd.
Much pain muſt expiate what much pain procur'd.
Fancy, and *ſenſe*, from an infected ſhore,
Thy cargo bring; and peſtilence the prize.
Then, ſuch thy thirſt (inſatiable thirſt!
By fond indulgence but inflam'd the more!)
Fancy ſtill cruiſes, when poor *ſenſe* is tir'd.
Imagination is the Paphian ſhop,
Where feeble happineſs, like Vulcan, lame,
Bids foul *ideas*, in their dark receſs,
And hot as hell (which kindled the black fires),
With wanton art, thoſe fatal arrows form,
Which murder all thy time, health, wealth, and fame.
Wouldſt thou receive them, other thoughts there are,
On angel-wing, deſcending from above,
Which theſe, with art divine, would counter-work,
And form celeſtial armour for thy peace.

In

In *this* is ſeen imagination's *guilt*;
But who can count her *follies?* She betrays thee,
To think in grandeur there is ſomething great.
For works of curious art, and antient fame,
Thy genius hungers, elegantly pain'd;
And foreign climes muſt cater for thy taſte.
Hence, what diſaſter!—Though the price was paid,
That perſecuting prieſt, the Turk of Rome,
Whoſe foot (ye gods!) though cloven, muſt be kiſs'd,
Detain'd thy dinner on the Latian ſhore;
(Such is the fate of honeſt Proteſtants!)
And poor *magnificence* is ſtarv'd to death.
Hence juſt reſentment, indignation, ire!—
Be pacify'd, if *outward* things are great,
'Tis magnanimity great things to ſcorn;
Pompous expences, and parades auguſt,
And courts, that inſalubrious ſoil to peace.
True happineſs ne'er enter'd at an eye;
True happineſs reſides in things unſeen.
No ſmiles of *fortune* ever bleſt the bad,
Nor can her frowns rob *innocence* of joys;
That jewel wanting, triple crowns are poor:
So tell his *Holineſs*, and be reveng'd.

Pleaſure, we both agree, is man's chief good;
Our only conteſt, what deſerves the name.
Give *pleaſure's* name to nought, but what has paſs'd
Th' authentic ſeal of *reaſon* (which, like Yorke,
Demurrs on what it paſſes), and defies
The tooth of time; when paſt, a pleaſure ſtill;
Dearer on trial, lovelier for its age,

And doubly to be priz'd, as it promotes
Our future, while it forms our preſent, joy.
Some joys the future overcaſt; and ſome
Throw all their beams that way, and gild the tomb
Some joys endear eternity; ſome give
Abhorr'd annihilation dreadful charms.
Are rival joys contending for thy choice?
Conſult thy *whole exiſtence*, and be ſafe;
That oracle will put all doubt to flight.
Short is the leſſon, though my lecture long,
Be good—and let heaven anſwer for the reſt.
Yet, with a ſigh o'er all mankind, I grant
In this our day of proof, our land of hope,
The *good man* has his clouds that intervene;
Clouds, that *obſcure* his ſublunary day,
But never *conquer*: ev'n the *beſt* muſt own,
Patience, and *reſignation*, are the pillars
Of human peace on earth. The pillars, Theſe:
But thoſe of Seth not more remote from Thee,
'Till *this* heroic leſſon thou haſt learnt;
To frown at *pleaſure*, and to ſmile in *pain*.
Fir'd at the proſpect of unclouded bliſs,
Heaven in reverſion, like the ſun, as yet
Beneath th' horizon, chears us in this world;
It ſheds, on ſouls ſuſceptible of light,
The glorious dawn of our eternal day.
" This (ſays Lorenzo) is a fair harangue:
" But can harangues blow back ſtrong nature's ſtr
" Or ſtem the tide heaven puſhes through our vei
" Which ſweeps away man's impotent reſolves,
"

"And lays his labour level with the *world?*"
Themſelves men make their comment on mankind;
And think nought *is*, but what they find at home:
Thus, weakneſs to chimæra turns the truth.
Nothing romantic has the Muſe preſcrib'd.
* Above, Lorenzo ſaw the man of earth,
The *mortal man*; and wretched was the ſight.
To balance that, to comfort, and exalt,
Now ſee the *man immortal*: him, I mean,
Who lives as ſuch; whoſe heart, full-bent on heaven,
Leans all *that* way, his bias to the ſtars.
The world's dark ſhades, in contraſt ſet, ſhall raiſe
His luſtre more; though bright, without a foil:
Obſerve his aweful portrait, and admire;
Nor ſtop at wonder; imitate, and live.
Some angel guide my pencil, while I draw,
What nothing leſs than angel can exceed!
A man on earth devoted to the ſkies;
Like ſhips in ſeas, while *in*, *above* the world.
With aſpect mild, and elevated eye,
Behold him ſeated on a mount ſerene,
Above the fogs of *ſenſe*, and *paſſion's* ſtorm;
All the black cares, and tumults, of this life,
Like harmleſs thunders, breaking at his feet,
Excite his pity, not impair his peace.
Earth's genuine ſons, the ſceptred, and the ſlave,
A mingled mob! a wandering herd! he ſees,
Bewilder'd in the vale; in all unlike!
His full reverſe in all! what higher praiſe?

What

* In a former Night.

What ſtronger demonſtration of the right?
The preſent all *their* care; the future, *his*.
When public welfare calls, or private want,
They give to fame; his bounty *he* conceals.
Their virtues varniſh nature; *his* exalt.
Mankind's eſteem *they* court; and *he*, his own.
Theirs, the wild chace of *falſe* felicities;
His, the compos'd poſſeſſion of the *true*.
Alike throughout is *his* conſiſtent peace,
All of one colour, and an even thread;
While party-colour'd ſhreds of happineſs,
With hideous gaps between, patch up for *them*
A madman's robe; each puff of *fortune* blows
The tatters by, and ſhews their nakedneſs.
He ſees with other eyes than *theirs*: where *they*
Behold a *ſun*, *he* ſpies a *Deity*;
What makes *them* only ſmile, makes *him* adore.
Where *they* ſee *mountains*, *he* but *atoms* ſees;
An *empire*, in *his* balance, weighs a *grain*.
They things terreſtrial worſhip, as divine:
His hopes immortal blow them by, as duſt,
That dims his ſight, and ſhortens his ſurvey,
Which longs, in Infinite, to loſe all bound.
Titles and honours (if they prove his fate)
He lays aſide to find his dignity;
No dignity *they* find in aught beſides.
They triumph in externals (which conceal
Man's real glory), proud of an eclipſe.
Himſelf too much *he* prizes to be proud,
And nothing thinks ſo great in man, as *man*.

Too

Too dear *he* holds his intereſt, to neglect
Another's welfare, or his right invade;
Their intereſt, like a lion, lives on prey.
They kindle at the ſhadow of a wrong;
Wrong *he* ſuſtains with temper, looks on heaven,
Nor ſtoops to think his injurer his foe;
Nought, but what wounds his virtue, wounds his peace.
A cover'd heart *their* character defends;
A cover'd heart *denies* him half his praiſe.
With nakedneſs his innocence agrees;
While *their* broad foliage teſtifies their fall.
Their no joys end, where *his* full feaſt begins:
His joys *create*, *Theirs* murder, future bliſs.
To triumph in exiſtence, *his* alone;
And *his* alone, triumphantly to think
His *true* exiſtence is not yet begun.
His glorious courſe was, yeſterday, complete;
Death, then, was welcome; yet life ſtill is ſweet.

But nothing charms Lorenzo, like the firm,
Undaunted breaſt—And whoſe is that high praiſe?
They yield to pleaſure, though they danger brave,
And ſhew no fortitude, but in the field;
If there they ſhew it, 'tis for glory ſhewn;
Nor will that cordial always man *their* hearts.
A cordial *his* ſuſtains, that cannot fail;
By pleaſure unſubdued, unbroke by pain,
He ſhares in that Omnipotence he truſts.
All-bearing, all-attempting, till he falls;
And when he falls, writes VICI on his ſhield.
From magnanimity, all *fear* above;

From

From nobler recompence, above *applauſe*;
Which owes to man's *ſhort* out-look all its charms.
Backward to credit what he never felt,
Lorenzo cries,—"Where ſhines this miracle?
"From what root riſes this *immortal man?*"
A root that grows not in Lorenzo's ground;
The root diſſect, nor wonder at the *flower*.
He follows nature (not like * thee) and ſhews us
An uninverted ſyſtem of a man.
His *appetite* wears *reaſon's* golden chain,
And finds, in due reſtraint, its luxury.
His *paſſion*, like an eagle well reclaim'd,
Is taught to fly at nought, but Infinite.
Patient his *hope*, un-anxious is his *care*,
His *caution* fearleſs, and his *grief* (if grief
The gods ordain) a ſtranger to deſpair.
And why?—Becauſe, affection, more than meet,
His wiſdom leaves not diſengag'd from heaven.
Thoſe ſecondary goods that ſmile on earth,
He, loving in *proportion*, loves in *peace*.
They moſt the world enjoy, who leaſt admire.
His *underſtanding* 'ſcapes the common cloud
Of fumes, ariſing from a boiling breaſt.
His head is clear, becauſe his heart is cool,
By worldly competitions uninflam'd.
The moderate movements of his ſoul admit
Diſtinct ideas, and matur'd debate,
An eye impartial, and an even ſcale;
Whence judgment ſound, and unrepenting choice.

T

* See page 241. ver. 838.

Thus, in a double ſenſe, the *good* are wiſe;
On its own dunghill, wiſer than the world.
What, then, the world? It *muſt* be doubly weak;
Strange truth! as ſoon would they believe their *Creed*.
Yet thus it is; nor otherwiſe *can* be;
So far from aught romantic, what I ſing.
Bliſs has no being, virtue has no ſtrength,
But from the proſpect of immortal life.
Who think earth all, or (what weighs juſt the ſame)
Who care no farther, *muſt* prize what it yields;
Fond of its fancies, proud of its parades.
Who thinks earth nothing, *can't* its charms admire;
He can't a foe, though moſt malignant, hate,
Becauſe that hate would prove his greater foe.
'Tis hard for *them* (yet who ſo loudly boaſt
Good-will to men?) to love their deareſt friend;
For may not he invade their *good ſupreme*,
Where the leaſt jealouſy turns love to gall?
All ſhines to *them*, that for a ſeaſon ſhines.
Each act, each thought, *he* queſtions, "What its weight,
"Its colour what, a thouſand ages hence?"—
And what it *there* appears, he deems it *now*.
Hence, pure are the receſſes of his ſoul.
The god-like man has nothing to conceal.
His virtue, conſtitutionally deep,
Has *habit's* firmneſs, and *affection's* flame;
Angels, ally'd, deſcend to feed the fire;
And *death*, which others ſlays, makes him a god.
And now, Lorenzo! bigot of this world!
Wont to diſdain poor bigots caught by heaven!

Stand

Stand by thy *ſcorn*, and be reduc'd to *nought*:
For what art thou?—Thou boaſter! while thy glare,
Thy gaudy grandeur, and mere worldly worth,
Like a broad miſt, at diſtance, ſtrikes us moſt;
And, like a miſt, is nothing when at hand;
His merit, like a mountain, on approach,
Swells more, and riſes nearer to the ſkies,
By promiſe *now*, and, by poſſeſſion, *ſoon*,
(Too *ſoon*, too *much*, it cannot be) his own.

From this thy juſt *annihilation* riſe,
Lorenzo! riſe to *ſomething*, by reply.
The world, thy client, liſtens, and expects;
And longs to crown thee with immortal praiſe.
Canſt thou be ſilent? No; for *wit* is thine;
And wit talks *moſt*, when *leaſt* ſhe has to ſay,
And *reaſon* interrupts not her career.
She 'll ſay—*That miſts above the mountains riſe*;
And, with a thouſand pleaſantries, amuſe;
She 'll ſparkle, puzzle, flutter, raiſe a duſt,
And fly conviction, in the duſt ſhe rais'd.

Wit, how delicious to man's dainty taſte?
'Tis precious, as the vehicle of *ſenſe*;
But, as its ſubſtitute, a dire diſeaſe.
Pernicious talent! flatter'd by the world,
By the blind world, which thinks the talent rare.
Wiſdom is rare, Lorenzo! wit abounds;
Paſſion can give it; ſometimes *wine* inſpires
The lucky flaſh; and *madneſs* rarely fails.
Whatever cauſe the ſpirit ſtrongly ſtirs,
Confers the bays, and rivals thy renown.

For

For thy renown, 't were well, was this the worſt;
Chance often hits it; and, to pique thee more,
See *dullneſs*, blundering on vivacities,
Shakes her ſage head at the calamity,
Which has expos'd, and let her down to thee.
But *wiſdom*, aweful wiſdom! which inſpects,
Diſcerns, compares, weighs, ſeparates, infers,
Seizes the right, and holds it to the laſt;
How rare! in ſenates, ſynods, ſought in vain;
Or if *there* found, 'tis ſacred to the *few*;
While a lewd proſtitute to multitudes,
Frequent, as fatal, *wit*: in civil life,
Wit makes an enterpriſer; *ſenſe*, a man.
Wit hates authority; commotion loves,
And thinks herſelf the lightning of the ſtorm.
In *ſtates*, 'tis dangerous; in *religion*, death:
Shall *wit* turn Chriſtian, when the dull *believe*?
Senſe is our *helmet*, *wit* is but the plume;
The *plume* expoſes, 'tis our *helmet* ſaves.
Senſe is the diamond, weighty, ſolid, ſound;
When cut by *wit*, it caſts a brighter beam;
Yet, *wit* apart, it is a diamond ſtill.
Wit, widow'd of *good ſenſe*, is worſe than nought;
It hoiſts more ſail to run againſt a rock.
Thus, a *half*-Cheſterfield is quite a fool;
Whom *dull* fools ſcorn, and bleſs their want of wit.
How ruinous the rock I warn thee ſhun,
Where Syrens ſit, to ſing thee to thy fate!
A *joy*, in which our *reaſon* bears no part,
Is but a *ſorrow* tickling, ere it ſtings.

Let

Let not the cooings of the world *allure* thee;
Which of her lovers ever found her true?
Happy! of this bad world who little know?—
And yet, we much muſt know her, to be *ſafe*.
To *know* the world, not *love* her, is thy point;
She gives but little, nor that little, long.
There is, I grant, a triumph of the pulſe;
A dance of ſpirits, a mere froth of joy,
Our *thoughtleſs agitation's* idle child,
That mantles high, that ſparkles, and expires,
Leaving the ſoul more vapid than before.
An *animal* ovation! ſuch as holds
No commerce with our *reaſon*, but ſubſiſts
On juices, through the well-ton'd tubes, well-ſt
A nice machine! ſcarce ever tun'd aright;
And when it jars—thy Syrens ſing no more,
Thy dance is done; the *demi-god* is thrown
(Short apotheoſis!) beneath the *man*,
In coward gloom immers'd, or fell deſpair.
Art thou yet *dull enough* deſpair to dread,
And ſtartle at deſtruction? If thou art,
Accept a buckler, take it to the field;
(A field of battle is this mortal life!)
When danger threatens, lay it on thy heart;
A ſingle ſentence proof againſt the *world*.
"*Soul, body, fortune!* Every good pertains
"To one of theſe; but prize not all alike;
"The goods of fortune to thy body's health,
"Body to ſoul, and ſoul ſubmit to God."
Wouldſt thou build laſting happineſs? Do this;

Th' inverted *pyramid* can never ſtand.
Is this truth doubtful? It outſhines the ſun;
Nay, the ſun ſhines not, but to ſhew us this,
The ſingle leſſon of mankind on earth.
And yet—yet, what? No news! mankind is mad;
Such mighty numbers lift againſt the right,
(And what can't numbers, when bewitch'd, atchieve!)
They talk themſelves to ſomething like belief,
That all earth's joys are theirs: As Athens' fool
Grinn'd from the port, on every ſail his own.
They grin; but wherefore? and how long the laugh?
Half ignorance, their mirth; and half, a lye;
To cheat the world, and cheat themſelves, they ſmile.
Hard either taſk! The moſt abandon'd own,
That *others*, if abandon'd, are undone:
Then, for themſelves, the moment *reaſon* wakes,
(And Providence denies it long repoſe)
O how laborious is their gaiety!
They ſcarce can ſwallow their ebullient ſpleen,
Scarce muſter patience to ſupport the farce,
And pump ſad laughter till the curtain falls.
Scarce, did I ſay? Some cannot ſit it out;
Oft their own daring hands the curtain draw,
And ſhew us *what* their joy, by their deſpair.
The clotted hair! gor'd breaſt! blaſpheming eye!
Its impious fury ſtill alive in death!
Shut, ſhut the ſhocking ſcene.—But heaven denies
A cover to ſuch guilt; and ſo ſhould man.
Look round, Lorenzo! ſee the reeking blade,
Th' inpoiſon'd phial, and the fatal ball;

The ſtrangling cord, and ſuffocating ſtream;
The loathſome rottenneſs, and foul decays
From raging riot (ſlower ſuicides!)
And *pride* in theſe, more execrable ſtill!
How horrid all to thought!—But horrors, theſe,
That vouch the truth; and aid my feeble ſong.
From *vice*, *ſenſe*, *fancy*, no man can be bleſt:
Bliſs is too great, to lodge within an hour:
When an immortal being aims at bliſs,
Duration is eſſential to the name.
O for a joy from *reaſon!* Joy from that,
Which makes man *man*; and, exercis'd aright,
Will make him *more*: A *bounteous* joy! that gives,
And promiſes; that weaves, with art divine,
The richeſt proſpect into preſent peace:
A joy *ambitious!* Joy in common held
With thrones ethereal, and their greater far;
A joy high-privileg'd from chance, time, death!
A joy, which *death* ſhall double, *judgment* crown!
Crown'd higher, and ſtill higher, at each ſtage,
Through bleſt eternity's long day; yet ſtill,
Not more remote from *ſorrow*, than from *Him*,
Whoſe laviſh hand, whoſe love ſtupendous, pours
So much of Deity on guilty duſt.
There, O my Lucia! may I meet thee there,
Where not thy preſence can improve my bliſs!
Affects not this the *ſages of the world?*
Can nought *affect* them, but what *fools* them too?
Eternity, depending on an hour,
Makes *ſerious thought* man's wiſdom, joy, and praiſe.

Nor need you bluſh (though ſometimes your deſigns
May ſhun the light) at your deſigns on heaven:
Sole point! where *over-baſhful* is your blame.
Are you not *wiſe?*—You know you are: Yet hear
One truth, amid your numerous ſchemes, miſlaid,
Or overlook'd, or thrown aſide, if ſeen;
"Our ſchemes to plan by *this* world, or the *next*,
"Is the ſole difference between wiſe and fool."
All *worthy men* will weigh you in *this* ſcale;
What wonder then, if *they* pronounce you *light?*
Is *their* eſteem alone not worth your care?
Accept my ſimple ſcheme of *common ſenſe*:
Thus, ſave your fame, and make *two* worlds your own.
The world *replies* not;—but the world *perſiſts*;
And puts the *cauſe* off to the longeſt day,
Planning evaſions for the day of doom.
So far, at that *re-hearing*, from redreſs,
They then turn *witneſſes* againſt themſelves:
Hear that, Lorenzo! nor be wiſe-to-morrow.
Haſte, haſte! A man, by nature, is in haſte;
For who ſhall anſwer for another hour?
'Tis highly prudent, to make *one* ſure friend;
And that thou canſt not do, this ſide the ſkies.
Ye ſons of earth! (nor *willing* to be more!)
Since *verſe* you think from prieſtcraft ſomewhat free,
Thus, in an age ſo gay, the Muſe plain truths
(Truths, which, at church, you *might* have heard in proſe)
Has ventur'd into light; well-pleas'd the verſe
Should be forgot, if you the truths retain;

And crown her with your welfare, not your praiſe.
But *praiſe* ſhe need not fear: I ſee my fate;
And headlong leap, like Curtius, down the gulph.
Since many an ample *volume*, mighty *teme*,
Muſt die; and die unwept; O thou minute,
Devoted *page!* go forth among thy foes;
Go, nobly proud of martyrdom for truth,
And die a double death: mankind, incens'd,
Denies thee long to live: nor ſhalt thou reſt
When thou art dead; in Stygian ſhades arraign'd
By Lucifer, as traitor to his throne;
And bold blaſphemer of his friend—the world;
The world, whoſe legions coſt him ſlender pay,
And *volunteers* around his banner ſwarm;
Prudent, as Pruſſia, in her zeal for Gaul!
" Are all, then, fools?" Lorenzo cries.—Yes, all,
But ſuch as hold *this* doctrine (new to thee);
" The mother of true wiſdom is the *will*";
The nobleſt *intellect*, a fool without it.
World-wiſdom much has done, and more may do,
In arts and ſciences, in wars and peace;
But art and ſcience, like thy wealth, will leave thee,
And make thee twice a beggar at thy death.
This is the *moſt* indulgence can afford;—
" *Thy wiſdom all can do, but—make thee wiſe.*"
Nor think this cenſure is ſevere on thee:
Satan, thy maſter, I dare call a dunce.

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